

A PROGRAM TO TRAIN PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TO DO HEALING:
HEALING THE SICK AND PROPHECYING
WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

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This qualitative case study evaluated a day long workshop that imparted the Holy Spirit gifts of healing and prophecy to physically disabled participants. The participants are from local Virginia Beach churches that have physical disabilities and lacked confidence in power ministry. The author hypothesized that, following the training, participants would effectively initiate healing and prophetic prayer over a four-week period. Comparison of pre- and post-tests, field notes, and focus group interviews generated data. Analysis of the data suggests the project was effective in imparting Holy Spirit gifts, which led to impactful prayer encounters, and resulted in powerful testimonies.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family, my wife Lynette and our two children, along with the late Honorable Barry Lalkston. I also dedicate this work to all of past healing revivalist throughout history, especially Kathryn Kulhman and Benny Hinn, the Revival Alliance, Dr. Randy Clark, and the Apostolic Network of Global Awakening and finally, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANGA	Apostolic Network of Global Awakening
PAL	Participatory Action Learning
PWD	People with Disabilities

God does not look for golden vessels. God does not look for silver vessels.

—Catherine Comin, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*

INTRODUCTION

This project's aim was to train and activate a group of physically disabled ministry volunteers to pray for physical healing and to give prophetic words of encouragement to those in our ministry contexts. It is believed if physically disabled volunteers are trained and equipped to pray for the sick and to prophecy in a one day workshop, utilizing the global school of ministry material, they will gain boldness and confidence to initiate direct prayer for others. It's not realistic to think that this project alone will solve the larger and more complex problem of, all the biases and issues that keep physically disabled people out of churches, however this could result in a spiritually beneficial paradigm shift for those in the ANGA network and local ministry leaders and their congregations by enabling them to reach out to the physically disabled in their congregations and draw them into the work of the Kingdom of God.

Although the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 gave the disabled community physical access into the mainstream of our religious organizations it cannot and does not change certain heart attitudes or beliefs regarding the disabled community. The problem statement, the main attitude that pertains here is the general lack of awareness and perception among Church leaders that there are, in fact, many disabled persons who would attend and serve in their churches; if they would simply take notice that the disabled exist and become more inclusive in their approach. The problem largely seems to reflect the adage, "out of sight, out of mind" when it comes to the disabled

being able to overcome barriers in attending and serving in churches. This project propose a solution to the later problem of people with disabilities not having a place to serve within the revival stream as it pertains to power evangelism.

The ministry models being taught in this project are biblically based. They are the five-step pray model and the seven primary ways that people receive Word of Knowledge. This will effectively equip people for the kind of ministry this project envisions. It is the same material taught by the Global School of Supernatural Ministry founded by Dr. Randy Clark, and is reliant upon the gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 1 defines my ministry focus, which is the convergence of my ministry context and my ministry journey. The first section of this chapter is a description of the context and identification of the problem that my ministry project will address. The second section is a review of some of my ministry skills, interests, and life experiences which influence the choice of my project theme. Third, is a discussion of the convergence of my ministry context and personal, ministerial development, and how my background, skills, and interests can serve the needs of the ministry context Finally, this chapter concludes with a theme statement and hypothesis, which will form the basis for the ministry project.

The focus of chapter 2 is how the author serves as a prophetic evangelist and leader of a local ministry designed to reach the general and disabled communities of Hampton Roads, Virginia. With the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, namely by imparting the power of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands, and the preaching and teaching of salvation, deliverance, healing, as well as through prophecy. The project

associated with this thesis seeks to build a bridge between the disabled community and the revival stream, with the ultimate goal of bringing the supernatural Kingdom of God within the reach of disabled believers, not only as people to be ministered to, but also as people who can provide effective ministry through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The focus of chapter 3 is Helen Keller. The author has chosen her as his historical figure because he shares a common desire to see disabled people excel, despite their limitations. Keller wanted to make the plight of persons with disabilities known and to see them excel in education, as well as make strides into all social aspects of society. Keller did this with excellence as she was a pioneer in becoming one of the first world famous disabled persons known in modernity, if not the very first. She was, arguably, the first disabled person who blazed trails and broke through ceilings in a way that made her a universal household name.

The focus of chapter 4 is the theological foundation which is to train and equip physically disabled ministry volunteers to prophesy and heal the sick, so that they will be able to minister to the congregations they are part of, or anyone the Lord presents to them with power. The purpose of this chapter is to arrive at an understanding of the theological foundation for Spirit- Baptism and the essential role the Holy Spirit has in empowering disabled believers.

The focus of chapter 5 is how the author will examine three core elements of the theory. in this chapter including, accessibility for trainees, movement within the training area and assistance with taking notes at training or journaling while ministering in the field. The author will show how these elements relate to the Biblical, historical, and Theological chapters.

There are three final results of this project were. The first being after witnessing the training of the physically disabled volunteer's ministry leaders who believe in the supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit will see that the Holy Spirit desires to use people with physical disabilities to minister effectively in the supernatural power of God. The second being that ministry leaders gained awareness among themselves of the need to integrate people with disabilities into church ministry, prayer teams and leadership, as appropriate. Finally, after attending the training and impartation service, the physically disabled volunteers that are trained from area churches in Hampton Roads, VA, were equipped to minister alongside their able bodied counterparts on their local churches pray teams by being able to prophesy and heal the sick.

The workshop replicated a compassion ministry of healing and prophetic encouragement, as modeled by Jesus, to empower the physically disabled to heal and prophesy within the revival stream which includes the Global Awakening/ANGA context. The PWD who participated in this research endeavor were empowered to minister to the sick and to prophesy. The workshop sought to build a bridge between the disabled community and revival-oriented ministry leaders, with the ultimate goal of bringing the supernatural Kingdom of God within reach of PWD believers, not only as people to be ministered to, but also as people who are able to provide effective ministry, by the power of the Holy Spirit. It was hypothesized that if disabled believers are empowered and trained to demonstrate the Gospel in the presence of local ministry leaders, members of the disabled community would realize that they can also be supernaturally used by God. Thusly, the ministry leaders would realize that disable persons can be supernaturally used. It was believed that this approach would challenge, the cultural, systemic bias in the

charismatic and Pentecostal traditions, which appear to presume that certain people are limited in ministry because of their physical disabilities

God is now calling the researcher back to his people in a similar way to how Moses was called to the Hebrews in Egypt, through teaching and training, to operate in the power of the Holy Spirit, and specifically, in the gifts of prophecy and healing. PWD were trained and equipped to pray for the sick and to prophesy in a day-long seminar, which was followed up with personal mentoring, they did become effective ministers in initiating direct prayer for others. It was postulated that physically disabled ministers gained an increased effectiveness in applying a supernatural prayer model after receiving workshop. The researcher aimed to bring PWD into an authentic encounter with the Holy Spirit so that they would feel the love and acceptance that comes from a relationship with the gentle Nazarene so that they would be empowered to minister to other people. By this kind of encounter, it was believed that PWD would learn that they can partner with the Holy Spirit, like any other anointed “able-bodied” believer. Through their relationship with the Holy Spirit, their disabilities would be brought to none effect.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

This chapter defines my ministry focus, which is the convergence of my ministry context and my ministry journey. The first section of this chapter is a description of the context and identification of the problem that my ministry project will address. The second section is a review of some of my ministry skills, interests, and life experiences which influence the choice of my project theme. Third, is a discussion of the convergence of my ministry context and personal, ministerial development, how my background, skills, as well as interests can serve the needs of the ministry context. Finally, this chapter concludes with a theme statement and hypothesis, which will form the basis for the ministry project.

My Ministry Context

My particular ministry context includes three core elements: The first being the disabled community in the American church, including the local ministry of the Faith Inclusion Network (hereafter referred to as FIN), located in Hampton Roads, Virginia, second is the international ministry of Dr. Randy Clark's Global Awakening (hereafter referred to as Global), the Apostolic Network of Global Awakening (hereafter referred to as ANGA), and finally the local ministry, Chariot of Fire Ministries (hereafter referred to as COFM), located in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The author is founder and president of

COFM. This section will identify pertinent historical, geographical, demographic, and current ministry descriptions of the ministry context, as well as strengths, weaknesses, and needs of the ministry context, with a view toward formulating a thesis and problem statement.

Disabled Community in the American Church Context

The larger ministry context, which is pertinent to this thesis/project, includes the disabled community in the North American Protestant Church. Although the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 gave this community physical access into the mainstream of our religious organizations, it cannot and does not change certain heart attitudes or beliefs regarding the disabled community. A significant issue is the general lack of awareness and perception among Church leaders that there are, in fact, many more disabled persons who would attend and serve in their churches, if they would simply take notice that the disabled community exists and become more inclusive in their outreach. People with disabilities commonly experience frustration with their church families over things as simple as not being able to get help with transportation to and from church. If given accessibility, not only in a physical sense, but in an emotional and spiritual sense, more disabled persons would likely not only come to church, but could thrive in leadership positions, if provided an opportunity. The problem largely seems to reflect the adage, “out of sight, out of mind,” when it comes to the disabled community being able to overcome barriers in attending and serving in churches.

During an in-person interview,¹ Karen Jackson, the founder of the Faith Inclusion Network² supported the assertion that churches do not realize that there are disabled persons living in their communities who would attend church if given some extra consideration. Much of this is not due to cruelty or dislike of disabled persons in general, but an unconscious bias on the part of able-bodied church people. For instance, many able-bodied people have never met or known disabled persons and therefore, they may feel awkward, unsure about how to help, or unsure about what to say around them. For example, Mrs. Jackson's church leaders were unsure about how to handle the potential for her autistic daughter's spontaneous outbursts during worship services. Thankfully, they worked through several difficult issues related to this, and the ministry of FIN was birthed, which aims to fully assimilate disabled persons into their faith communities.

In the interview cited above, FIN's founder said there are three main objectives or problem areas that FIN currently seeks to mitigate. These include, 1) getting churches to think beyond getting disabled persons to attend church on Sundays, to include helping them find friends and employment, 2) to have less segregated programming, meaning that disabled persons would be mainstreamed within different classes and groups wherever and whenever possible, and 3) empowering people with disabilities to take up leadership positions in the Church as the Lord would direct. This third focus area points to a desired long-term by-product or future result of the project, which is to develop greater awareness among pastors and religious leaders of the need to integrate people with

¹ Karen Jackson, interview by author, Norfolk, March 26, 2018.

² "About Faith Inclusion Network," Faith Inclusion Network (FIN) of Hampton Roads, accessed March 20, 2018, <http://www.faithinclusionnetwork.org/about/>. FIN of Hampton Roads is a non-profit, grass roots organization founded in May of 2008, dedicated to helping faith communities develop inclusive ministries for people with disabilities and helping families affected by disability to find welcoming and accessible places to worship.

disabilities into church ministry and leadership, as appropriate. Further, though FIN does significant work for the disabled community, a noticeable limitation is that they do not embrace, as a ministry, the demonstrative power of the Holy Spirit. Or, put another way, they do not address power evangelism.

The North American church would benefit from paying greater attention to the growing numbers within the disabled community in America, which totals 56.8 million people, or nearly 20% of the population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.³ Author Mark Pinsky echoes Karen Jackson's belief that while many people in the church have the desire to help, they do not have the knowledge or the conviction that they can do anything that would make an impact on the disabled community. In other words, if someone took the small step to become familiar with the needs of the disabled community and how they could empower disabled persons, then the disabled community could be more active in the Church in many facets. Even with these difficulties and limitations, there are many inspiring stories of churches and places of worship that are starting to catch the vision of making accommodations for the disabled community in very important ways beyond putting in a ramp or elevator for physical access.⁴

On the road toward making the American church more accommodating and inclusive of disabled persons, church leaders must be aware of the Tanakh's theology, which suggests acceptable isolation of a disabled person. The Tanakh suggests that people with physical defects should not come near the presence of the Lord (Lev. 21:18-

³ "QuickFacts," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed February 28, 2018, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/miscellaneous/cb12-134.html>. About 56.7 million people — 19 percent of the population — had a disability in 2010, according to a broad definition of disability, with more than half of them reporting the disability was severe.

⁴ Mark I. Pinsky, *Amazing Gifts: Stories of Faith, Disability, and Inclusion* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2012), 5.

20). This evident bias carries through to the time of Jesus, when people with leprosy were ostracized and were forced to continuously announce to the people around them that they were unclean. This was done so that the “ceremonially clean persons within the community” could easily avoid contamination, as prescribed under the Levitical code. Although this Tanakh tradition was challenged by Jesus, (Matt 8:2-4) and churches, today, would likely never openly hold this view, certain hidden biases in churches can still be felt and experienced by the disabled community in subtle and not so subtle ways, including Pentecostal and other communities that claim to believe in signs, wonders, and miracles.

For example, there is young lady who has a disability caused by a condition called spina bifida who, while attending a local worship service in the Virginia Beach area, was physically assaulted by a well-meaning but severely misguided “prayer warrior” who tried to yank her out of her chair yelling, “In the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk!” This young woman had not asked for prayer, nor was she healed. Unfortunately, it is not an uncommon experience for a disabled person to encounter similar aggressive tactics. It is one thing to pray a bold prayer out of an earnest and sincere desire to bring health and wholeness to a suffering person, but it is quite another to pray for someone out of a desire to earn a spiritual notch in their belt. In the first case, it is easier to accept that a person has not been healed after prayer, but aggressive and insensitive prayer tactics just leave the disabled person feeling more marginalized than before the prayer. The church should learn to pray for the disabled community out of the compassion and wisdom of Jesus, so that whether healing occurs or not, they will feel the loved and be accepted within their

faith community. Dr. Clark teaches his prayer teams that they should, primarily, be channels for the love of God as well as agents of comfort and power for the Holy Spirit.⁵

Another important person who speaks to this ministry context is an expert in the disability field, named Elizabeth Terschuur.⁶ She is employed as a dance instructor and works with people who are on the autism spectrum. She has a unique way of looking at the language of disability. Terschuur reflects the growing trend not to see and talk about disability according to the classic categories and terms that are widely accepted in most circles. Instead of using the term “disability” she uses the term “differently enabled (gifted)” when talking about her students or someone who has been defined as having a physical or mental disability. Terschuur suggests that people tend to defy labels that society tries to place on them. She points out that peoples’ brains are plastic and are always developing and changing. One could say that in her view, people with disabilities should be considered similar to how we perceive God, in that it is a mistake to describe them by putting them in one box, even if they have a diagnosis. Stated another way: people will continue to operate outside of prescriptive boundaries.

Another interesting characteristic of Terschuur’s thinking when it comes to disability includes the belief that when praying for healing of the “differently enabled,” the Church should adopt the social paradigm of disability rather than a strict medical paradigm, which tends to define disability in primarily physical terms. As an example of how healing prayer can be misguided in a charismatic, Christian context, she describes

⁵ Randy Clark, *Global Awakening Ministry Team Training Manual* (Mechanicsburg, PA: ANGA, 2012), 15.

⁶ Elizabeth Terschuur, phone interview by author, Virginia Beach, March 29, 2018. Terschuur holds a Master’s Degree from University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) and wrote her thesis on dance as therapy for autistic patients.

becoming incensed after having visited a well-known charismatic church and hearing a pastor state that autism is a devil that needs to be cast out. She was horrified at what she described as a lack of understanding and empathy. For autism to be healed, in Terschuur's view, an autistic person's brain chemistry would have to be altered, thereby fundamentally changing their personality. In other words, the outcome would change the unique way that autistic persons process information, and thereby, "normalize" them. She laughs at that notion and ponders, "How boring would that be?"

While this paper accepts the more traditional, medical paradigm when it comes to ministering healing, there is deep admiration and respect for Tershuur and those who hold similar views. Healing ministries could learn and grow by interacting with, and at some points, even adopting the social paradigm of healing, as opposed to using a strict medical/physical paradigm.

Global Awakening and Revival Stream Context

Dr. Randy Clark is the founder and leader of Global Awakening Ministries, but to understand the ministry of Global, one must know about another great man of God by the name of John Wimber. It was from John Wimber and the Vineyard movement that Dr. Clark first learned how to pray for the sick and receive Words of Knowledge. Dr. Clark first joined the Vineyard movement in 1984, before planting his first Vineyard Church in St. Louis, MO. An important prophecy that Wimber gave Dr. Clark was that he was a

“Prince in the Kingdom of God,” and that his ministry would one day have a trans-global impact on the world.⁷

Dr. Clark first came to international stage in the Vineyard movement when the revival known as the “Toronto Blessing” began on January 20th, 1994. This revival has been characterized by a lot of the same manifestations as previous revivals such as Cain Ridge. Besides countless salvations, there were many demonstrative manifestations of the Holy Spirit, including uncontrollable laughter, quaking and shaking, and falling down by the power of God. Among the more controversial manifestations were the expression of animal noises, such as barking and growling. These manifestations led the Vineyard movement, under Wimber’s leadership, to “disengage” the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church, now referred to simply as Catch the Fire Toronto.⁸

Since Wimber’s death there seems to be an increasing intentional effort on the part of Christy Wimber the daughter in-law of John Wimber to separate and distance Wimber’s legacy from Dr. Clark’s and the ministries impacted by Dr. Clark and the Toronto Blessing.⁹ Although Mrs. Wimber asserts that Dr. Clark and Wimber were never close partners in ministry, there is evidence that seems to contradict her assertion. The evidence of Dr. Clark and Wimber’s closeness is heard in Dr. Clark’s numerous loving and respectful testimonies about, and references to, Wimber, and can also be seen in Dr. Clark’s personal ministry style. Additionally, Dr. Clark appears to derive much of his

⁷ “History of Global Awakening,” Global Awakening, accessed March 20, 2018, <https://globalawakening.com/home/about-global-awakening/history-of-global-awakening>.

⁸ Candy Gunther Brown, *Testing Prayer: Science and Healing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 22.

⁹ Christy Wimber, interview by the author, Virginia Beach, March 19, 2018. Christy Wimber is the daughter-in-law of the late John Wimber and took the role of custodian of Wimber’s written materials before they became a library collection at Regent University.

five-step prayer model from Wimber's teaching. It is important to give honor to who honor is due (Rom 13:7).

The stated vision and mission of Global Awakening includes lighting the fires of revival and renewal in the Church through teaching and equipping the saints to do the works that Jesus commanded his disciples to do (Matt 10:7-8).¹⁰ Although the mission of Global Awakening has been faithfully and impressively carried out by thousands of able-bodied persons, there is a lack of transference of the idea that "everyone gets to play,"¹¹ at least as it pertains to those with physical disabilities. There's no doubt the idea that "everyone gets to play" is contained in the hearts of Dr. Clark and the leaders of his organization, but there appears to be very few, if any, disabled persons actually attending the Global schools or serving on the prayer teams at the conferences and missions trips.¹² There seems to be room for an increase in the number of disabled persons involved at these schools and events, given the massive number of disabled persons in the United States. Could a reason that disabled persons are not more involved be due to fear of being made a "prayer target?" This issue needs to be addressed, broadly, even before these people can be trained and released to give Words of Knowledge and pray for the sick, themselves.

¹⁰ "Vision and Mission," Global Awakening, accessed March 23, 2018, <https://globalawakening.com/home/about-global-awakening/vision-and-mission>.

¹¹ John Wimber, *Everyone Gets to Play: John Wimber's Writings and Teachings On Life Together in Christ* (Boise, ID: Ampelōn Publishing, 2008), 1. The title of the book reflects the popular saying often made by Wimber about the priesthood of all believers, namely that all can be used by God to heal the sick, etc.

¹² The author is thankful that he has been able to breakthrough as a disabled person to minister freely at Randy Clark events and others like it, but not everyone has my extroverted personality and strong headedness.

Global Awakening's Executive Director, Dr. Tom Jones, confirmed this concern when he related two stories about ministering to disabled persons during a teaching he gave on the five-step prayer model.¹³ In the first example, Dr. Jones recounted how when he was ministering in Brazil, the leader of the local church's deaf ministry approached the Global team and said, "Please ask us what we want prayer for. People just assume we need healing for deafness, but we are more than our deafness." In the second example, Dr. Jones shared about a wheelchair bound Vietnam veteran who was a member of the church that he pastored. The man did not want to receive healing prayer for his own condition but was willing and able to be trained and used effectively on the prayer team to bring healing to others, even though he remained wheelchair bound. Dr. Jones should be commended for using these examples in his teaching, however, examples like these need to be given an even more prominent place in Global's teaching and equipping materials. Despite Dr. Jones' insight, there is still great ignorance in the revival-motivated milieu about what it means to minister, sensitively, to disabled persons, and what is possible for a disabled person to accomplish through the power of the Holy Spirit. Again, there is no issue with people praying for the physical manifestation of healing for a disabled person, but this must be done through the compassion and wisdom of Jesus.

There is one additional bias that appears to demonstrate itself as a weakness in the Global and revival context, which will be addressed here. At a very recent conference hosted by Global Awakening in April 2018 disabled persons were instructed to sit in the balcony section. The author agreed to this arrangement, but later inquired as to why this was the case. The reasons given had to do with the crowded conditions, general safety,

¹³ Tom Jones, "5 Step Prayer Model" (teaching video), accessed March 3, 2018, <https://globalondemand.vhx.tv/videos/kingdom-foundations-ssn1-tom-jones-1>.

and concerns for the crowd's sight being blocked by wheelchairs. When seated in the balcony the author began to feel disconnected from his Doctor of Ministry peer group and requested that he be allowed to sit with them in the designated seating area on the floor level. He was thankfully given such permission. As it turned out, all that needed to be done to accommodate him was to simply move a chair. No one's sight was blocked, nor was safety compromised.¹⁴ The point is that this situation signals a common example of an unconscious, systemic bias toward the disabled community, which can cause them to feel disregarded, and falls short of the goal of total inclusion. Thankfully, the author was able to experience a change in the policy for himself, but unfortunately, all of the other people who were in wheelchairs remained limited to the balcony seating.¹⁵ Typically, revival-motivated ministries have allowed the author to freely sit in front of the platform. However, these allowances may have been due to his persistence and refusal to be denied access to the fullest possible experience. One of the unintended consequences of a limited seating policy for a disabled person is that physical access is given, but inclusiveness is not, which can result in them still feeling isolated. It is important to note the distinction between access and inclusivity; access addresses physical presence, but inclusivity addresses the deep, emotional parts of a person.

¹⁴ Ironically by putting the disabled up in the balcony the church was putting them at higher risk than if they allowed them to be on the floor level. The only way for wheelchair bound people to gain access to and from the balcony was via an elevator and, in the event of an electrical outage or fire, the elevators usually don't work.

¹⁵ Unfortunately, the author heard more than one angry or frustrated comment by disabled conference attendees about the church seating policy for the disabled which limited them to the balcony. Those individuals did not feel loved and accepted in this regard.

Chariot of Fire Ministries Context

Chariot of Fire Ministries, based in Virginia Beach, Virginia (hereafter called COFM) was founded by the author in 2010. Since its inception, this ministry has held occasional meetings where teaching and personal prophetic ministry have been the emphasis. However, the ministry vision has recently been revamped to focus on evangelistic meetings with an even greater emphasis on the demonstration of all the charismata. The primary audience and benefactors of this ministry, besides those who come to faith in Christ, will be the disabled community who will be equipped to operate in the supernatural with the hope that those whom God calls, will one day be able to take their places in the five-fold offices of the church.

The strength of COFM meetings, which have occurred about three times a year, has been the accurate and powerful prophetic words that are uttered. The corporate, prophetic anointing in these meetings have been so strong, at times, that everyone present begins to prophesy, and participants receive inspired words of encouragement. By the grace of God, there have even been times when births¹⁶ and sexes of pre-born children were accurately prophesied.

With the aforesaid information in mind, the biggest weakness of COFM appears to be the lack of connection within the disabled community, which causes these special people to miss an opportunity to experience how much God loves them in their condition. Connecting with this community will help them to overcome the feelings of depression and suicidal thoughts that often come because of the stigma attached to their conditions.

¹⁶ This was not taught, nor encouraged during the author's prophetic training.

It is hoped that building a bridge to this community will result in special honor being given to the seemingly “weaker parts” of the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:23).

My Ministry Journey

“Clay, if you never get healed will you still pray for the sick?” This was a critical question that was asked to me in 2007 by Dr. Randy Clark. He came to visit my seminary at Regent University’s School of Divinity and I was eager to shake his hand and spend a few minutes getting to know him. Being a seeker of God, especially one who hopes for revival, I was eager to meet Dr. Clark, who had just written his book, *There is More* (2010). I didn’t just get a few minutes of his time, but Dr. Clark was gracious to spend forty-five minutes with me in an intimate conversation. His question to me and my answer to it have proven to be a beacon of hope and a big motivation for my heart in the darkest of times.

Dr. Clark’s question has called me back to God while struggling with the fact that my body hasn’t experienced a healing from Cerebral Palsy, even after the anointed prayers of thousands of Christians, including the prayerful hands of Dr. Clark and so many other leaders within the modern healing revival movement. However, because of Dr. Clark, I have not lost hope for my healing neither in this life nor in the life beyond. Perhaps most importantly, by His grace, I often see God heal and deliver others through the laying on of my hands. So, the obvious answer to his question was, and remains, a resounding “Yes, I will still pray for the sick.” My pursuit of God and desire to be an instrument of healing for the Holy Spirit has led me on a spiritual path that has included

many high and low points, and has formed me into a passionate man on a mission to change the world by declaring and demonstrating the Kingdom of God.

Only by divine grace does God's call become evident in my life by which I minister a supernatural Gospel, which includes divine healing and prophecy, even while living with Cerebral Palsy and being confined to a wheelchair. While in utero, my mother suffered a major hemorrhage and was rushed to the hospital. Twelve hours later, the doctors performed an emergency C-section, two months prior to my reaching full-term. Death was a real possibility.¹⁷ Against many odds, at the time of my birth, evidence of my survival suggests to me that God wants me here and has had a plan for me since I was conceived. Through the many obstacles I have faced and overcome as a result of Cerebral Palsy since my birth, the Lord has made His calling on my life to prophesy and help deliver others, abundantly clear, and has confirmed this with life verses like Jeremiah 1:5¹⁸ and Luke 4:18.¹⁹

Despite God's abundant grace, I am still in the process of overcoming many emotional and physical challenges, which stem from my Cerebral Palsy. Unfortunately, my parents never provided a good example of how to express difficult emotions, especially fear, sadness, and anger about my condition. Instead of being allowed to express anger and grieve losses as a result of my disability, my parents overcompensated

¹⁷ Cerebral palsy is a condition which denotes damage to the cerebral cortex and is accompanied by limited bodily function that can include but is not limited to the four major extremities to the body, most notably the arms and legs. I have a form of this condition called spastic cerebral palsy which leaves me with limited bodily function, but with full brain function minus the ability to walk and visually read.

¹⁸ Jer. 1:5 in the New Living Translation (NLT) says, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

¹⁹ Lk 4:18 in the New Living Translation (NLT) says, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free."

by emphasizing that I could do anything other kids could do, mainstreaming me in school and martial art activities. This approach was their way of encouraging me to rise above my circumstances. While this was helpful in areas like social development, as well as developing a resistance to fall into a victim's mentality, I felt like I was never allowed to fully express difficult emotions that I had felt about myself. In particular, I struggled with how I felt about my own disability. Years later, the Lord seems to be continuously working in my life to help me travail through difficult emotions in a healthy way, so that I can be a better minister to my family, my church, and the disabled community at large.

In my experience being married to my wife over the last eight years, the Lord has been teaching me perseverance and patience. I believe the Lord has put us together so that we could hold each other up and walk through life together as an example of what God can and will do with two "broken people" who are willing to stick together through the toughest of times and choose to serve Him. Our marriage gives us opportunities every day to mature emotionally, and my wife is a significant personal supporter of my life and my ministry. She is also disabled and does not have full use of one of her hands. Added to these physical challenges, we've had to endure crises of faith related to losing an unborn child and a resultant moral failure, which occurred as a result of this challenge. God has graciously restored me and my wife.

In addition to marriage, my educational development has helped prepare me for a life of ministry. I earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in religious studies at Virginia Wesleyan University and a Master of Divinity degree from Regent University, in Virginia Beach, Virginia. One of the greatest gifts, which are evidenced in my educational journey, is a proficiency in thinking and speaking about theological ideas and

concepts. My understanding of theology has provided the underpinnings to the practical working out of that theology in a ministry context. To that end, the most useful class I had taken in Divinity School was a practical ministry course on the spiritual gifts. This class, along with many of the practical trainings given at revival conferences, including those sponsored by Global Awakening and Catch the Fire Toronto, has provided a safe and inspirational platform for the gifts of healing and prophecy to be developed in my life. These classes and conferences have provided the foundation for my understanding of ministry.

Even more impactful than my educational experience was the dynamic and sudden way that God transformed me at the point of my conversion. I was raised in the Methodist church where I was taught rudimentary doctrines of my faith, including the Triune nature of God, as well as the death, burial, and third day resurrection of Jesus. Not until I was convinced by, and powerfully baptized in the Holy Spirit at Regent University on November 15, 2000, did my faith truly become a living faith. My faith went from mere mental assent to a creed, to a living conviction and vibrant relationship with the Triune God. In this experience, I was also oriented toward living and ministering a supernatural life.

Other than COFM meetings, which occur about three or four times a year, my professional ministry has been limited to a few scheduled, and some impromptu ministry opportunities at local church meetings. My strongest gifting is in the prophetic ministry and through this, people I've ministered to have reported receiving encouraging and inspired words from God. Up to, and including this point in my journey, I have not been hired to fill a professional ministry position. This is a desire of mine and the fact that

nothing has materialized, despite my ministry training and educational background, has been a source of frustration and a significant reason why I am pursuing this thesis.

The Synergy

Despite certain weaknesses in the ministry context, great strides have been taken to reach out to and help the disabled community. Religious facilities and ministries are more accessible to the disabled community, and people with disabilities are recognized as having a need for ministry. However, as has been mentioned above, there is an obvious lack of complete inclusion. The lack of inclusion is especially apparent as it pertains to having disabled ministers serving on prayer teams during times that are dedicated to supernatural ministry and serving in positions of church leadership. Instead, the author has observed and experienced that disabled persons in the revival stream are targets to be prayed for more than they are seen as viable ministers of the Gospel.

Given these weaknesses, the author believes that God is raising him up to fully embrace the disabled community and to train disabled persons to become full participants in the revival-oriented branches of Christianity, who are displaying the works of Jesus, powerfully. The project associated with this doctoral thesis seeks to build a bridge between the disabled community and the revival-oriented communities, with the ultimate goal of bringing the supernatural Kingdom of God within reach of disabled believers, not only as people to be ministered to, but also as people who are able to provide effective ministry, by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is hoped that this approach would directly challenge, and ultimately conquer, the cultural, systemic bias in the charismatic and

Pentecostal traditions, which appear to presume that certain people are limited in ministry because of their mental or physical disabilities.

In this project, I will first acknowledge the emotional plight that those with lifelong disabilities tend to suffer. Disabled persons are often overlooked or made to feel invisible to the able-bodied world. This can lead to frustration, anger, and low self-esteem. God has recently given me/this author an opportunity to face the challenge of processing difficult emotions related to this stigma, which has led to spiritual healing. Throughout this process, God has provided more empathy for the disabled community and has provided connections with disabled persons to empower them in supernatural ministry. This is a newly realized call, since most of my/the author's journey has included avoiding being identified with the disabled community, because of a perception of disabled persons being content to live within the limitations of their disability.

God is now calling me/the author back to these very people in a similar way to how Moses was called to the Hebrews in Egypt, through teaching and training, to operate in the power of the Holy Spirit, and specifically, in the gifts of prophecy and healing. The author hypothesizes that if disabled believers are empowered and trained to demonstrate the Gospel in the presence of local pastors in the charismatic and revival-oriented branches of the Church, members of the disabled community will realize that they can also be supernaturally used by God. Thusly, the pastors will realize that disabled persons can be supernaturally used, which could challenge the systemic bias against participating in ministry.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

The author serves as a prophetic evangelist and leader of a local ministry designed to reach the general and disabled communities of Hampton Roads, Virginia. With the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, namely by imparting the power of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands, the preaching and teaching of salvation, deliverance, healing, as well as through prophecy. The project associated with this thesis seeks to build a bridge between the disabled community and the revival stream, with the ultimate goal of bringing the supernatural Kingdom of God within the reach of disabled believers, not only as people to be ministered to, but also as people who can provide effective ministry through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The goal of this chapter is to look at how selected passages from the Tanakh and New Testament (NT) speak about demonstrating biblical compassion as well as an attitude of total inclusivity toward people with disabilities (PWD). The Tanakh pericope comes from 2 Sam 9:1-13¹, which is about King David's loyalty shown toward Jonathan, in the full restoration of Jonathan's crippled son Mephibosheth to the king's palace. The NT study will look at the larger context of 1 Cor. 12:4-27, which has to do with the distribution of the various gifts of the Spirit, as well as unity of the Body of Christ. The

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references in this chapter are from the New American Standard Bible (NASB).

focus of exegesis will be on the verses, which deal with the gifts of Word of Knowledge and healings (1 Cor. 12:8-9), and then on verses about giving greater honor to the parts of the Body of Christ where there is lack (1 Cor. 12:23-24). Both the Tanakh and NT sections will begin with background and overview information of the passages in order to make orthodox applications according to the original intent of the respective biblical writers. To this end, detailed word studies will be given on key terms that are relevant to the project. The exegesis will include biblically sound interpretations and applications of the studied texts, followed by a summary and conclusion.

Tanakh Exegesis

Background: Are the Disabled People Clean or Unclean?

The Tanakh makes it clear that people with physical defects shall not come near to the presence of the LORD (Lev. 21:18-20). While one could argue that the LORD's intention in these verses was to demonstrate the seriousness of sin, as well as the people's need for the Messiah, the Hebrew understanding of this verse and others like it, resulted in a systemic religious bias against PWD and people with various diseases. Hebrew scholar Michael L. Brown affirms this idea by stating that, in general, sickness and disease are seen as divine curses or judgements during the period in which the Tanakh was written.² As an example, those stricken with leprosy had to cover their faces, cry out that they were unclean, and live alone outside the camp (Lev 13:45-46). By extension of this clear Tanakh link between sickness and disability with God's divine judgement, an

² Michael L. Brown, *Israel's Divine Healer*, Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 1995), 101.

assumption is made here that many PWD in Israel up to the time of Christ would have been considered cursed by God in some way. This reality would have painfully separated them from the community of faith, a privilege only afforded to able-bodied Israelites.

Contrary to the Hebraic understanding of this verse, Jesus did not avoid the sick or disabled, as seen when he ministered to the leper in such a way that violated the religious and legal prohibitions against touching someone who was ritually impure (Matt. 8:3). In doing so, he not only healed the leper, physically, but emotionally and spiritually, by restoring him to the religious community. While most of the Hebrew Scriptures strictly prohibit PWD from coming into the presence of the LORD, therefore separating them from the community, the selected Tanakh passage of study (2 Sam. 9) gives an alternative view of PWD, one that is redemptive. King David's treatment of the crippled Mephibosheth restored him to the status of royalty and, in this way, foreshadowed the work of Calvary. King David acted in accordance with God's heart³ toward Mephibosheth, demonstrating God's *hesed* (lovingkindness) for PWD. What follows is an exegesis of the (2 Sam. 9) passage so that the LORD's view of PWD will be made clear.

Background, Structure, and Context

2 Sam 9 consists of three main sections of dialogue sandwiched between an opening (v.1) and concluding summary (vv.12-13). The first dialogue is between King David and Ziba (vv. 2-4), the second dialogue is between King David and Mephibosheth (vv. 5-8), and the third dialogue is between King David and Ziba (vv. 9-11). This study

³ David is described as a man after God's own heart in I Sam. 14:13.

will reference all three sections for context, but focus mainly on the dialogue between King David and Mephibosheth. The overall structure of the chapter makes for a very straightforward reading and lends itself to a clear and concise exegetical study.

According to the scholars found in the work cited say that this pericope once stood in continual narrative sequence with 2 Sam 21:1-14, which recounts the execution of seven members of the house of Saul.⁴ This placement is plausible, since it gives an explanation for King David's question in the first verse of the pericope, the original order that the pericope was placed is immaterial to this exegesis.

Nevertheless, awareness of the context that surrounds this passage yields valuable insight leading up to King David and Mephibosheth's encounter in 2 Sam 9:6-9, which is recorded here:

Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and prostrated himself. And David said, "Mephibosheth." And he said, "Here is your servant!" David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show kindness (*hesed*) to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul; and you shall eat at my table regularly." Again he prostrated himself and said, "What is your servant, that you should regard a dead dog like me? Then the king called Saul's servant Ziba and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson."

In the chapters previous to 2 Sam 9, Saul had been replaced by David as king, as well as David has now solidified his power over the unified Kingdom of Israel, by subduing the House of Saul and bringing them under subjection (2 Sam. 8:15). King David's rise to power put him in a position to fulfill his covenant to Jonathan, which includes his oath to Saul when he spared his life (1 Sam. 24:22). The covenant between King David and Jonathan was made shortly after they met, "Then Jonathan made a

⁴ A. A. Anderson, *Word Biblical Commentary: 2 Samuel*, eds. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985), 140.

covenant with David, because he loved him as himself. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that he was wearing, and gave it to David, and his armor and even his sword and his bow and his belt” (1 Sam 23:18). The covenant was renewed by King David and Jonathan near the end of their time together in Gibeah, “. . . ‘and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family’. . . Thus Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, ‘May the Lord seek out the enemies of David.’ Jonathan made David swear again, by his love for him; for he loved him as he loved himself” (1 Sam 20:16-17). The covenant is again re-affirmed by King David and Jonathan, “Then the two of them made a covenant before the Lord. . .” (1 Sam 23:18). These three instances of King David and Jonathan making, and then confirming and reaffirming their covenant with each other, this suggests that King David was a man of his word.

In Hebraic culture, making and breaking a covenant was viewed as a capital offense (Gen 15:9-23), which could have given anyone from Saul’s bloodline the right to kill King David if he ever failed to be faithful to his covenant with Jonathan and Saul. The seriousness of breaking covenant is also shown when Jacob admonishes his sons for killing Shechem and his kin, after having made a covenant with him (Gen 34:30-31). It is seen from these passages that covenants made between heads of household are, in fact, so binding that their sons are obliged to carry the covenant out and make sure that it is fulfilled if the original covenant parties are unable to do so. This is the essence of honor in near eastern cultures. So, for King David to act in any other way than honor toward his covenant with Jonathan it would have been unthinkable and inexcusable. The loving-kindness, or *hesed*, that King David showed to Mephibosheth for Jonathan’s sake, is directly tied to the covenant that he made with the house of Saul. Scholar, Nelson Glueck

confirms the connection between *hesed* and covenant by stating, “The obligation and rights acquired through a covenant are translated into corresponding actions through *hesed*. *Hesed* is the real essence of *berith* (covenant), and it can almost be said that it is its very content.”⁵

The following discussion will show that the Hebrew term *hesed* is a very rich and strong, covenantal word. The word is at the very heart and center of the theme of this passage, as is the total restoration of Mephibosheth, which resulted from King David’s loyalty to his covenant with Jonathan.

Hesed: The Covenantal Love of God

The word for “kindness” when it is transliterated is the Hebrew term *hesed*. This term is loaded with deep theological meaning. The term, in the form of the singular masculine noun appears in the passage three times and occurs sixty-six times in the Tanakh. Overall, there are occurrences of two-hundred-forty-seven derivatives of *hesed* in the entire Tanakh.⁶ Importantly, the word *hesed* appears not once or twice, but three times (v.1, v.3, v.7) in the passage of study. This fact, in and of itself, indicates a definite emphasis that the author is making. In short, King David’s acts of kindness to Mephibosheth were made in accordance with the covenant that he made with the house of Saul.

⁵ Nelson Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible* (Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College Press, 1967), 47.

⁶ Brown-Driver-Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon, Unabridged*, Electronic Database, Biblesoft, Inc., accessed September 13, 2018, <https://biblehub.com/bdb/2617.htm>.

Hesed is, “. . . a love which involves some obligation, and David is referring to his covenant with Jonathan which bound him to return ‘*hesed* to (his) descendants.’”⁷ On this aspect of obligation concerning the term *hesed*, Glueck writes,

The ‘*hesed* that David intended to show. . . stemmed not from friendship alone but also from the sacred covenant in accordance with the obligation incurred by invoking Yahweh’s name . . . The *hesed* shown by David to Jonathan’s house was neither grace nor mercy; it was brotherliness required by covenantal loyalty.’⁸

Both Birch and Glueck do well in pointing out the element of duty and obligation that is embodied in the term *hesed*, however the essence of *hesed* can and does extend beyond mere obligation and duty to heart felt compassion, can especially be illustrated in the details of King David’s full restoration of Mephibosheth.

For King David to follow the cultural traditions of his day and leave Mephibosheth separated from, the community of faith because of Mephibosheth’s disability (Lev 21:18), would not only be unkind, but reprehensible. The reasoning behind this strong statement is the great sense of loyal duty that *hesed* encapsulates in the covenant that King David made with the house of Saul, and in particular those he made with Jonathan. In summary, the meaning of *hesed* in this passage can be tied to the loyal covenantal love that the LORD shows to the Children of Israel. Glueck affirms this meaning when he says, “David was ready to show the same inviolable *hesed* as does God to those who are near to him, for the zeal for duty and the inviolability of an oath are characteristic of *hesed*.”⁹

⁷ Bruce Birch, *The New Interpreter's Bible: 2 Samuel* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 1092.

⁸ Glueck, *Hesed*, 49.

⁹ Glueck, *Hesed*, 49.

The Full Restoration of Mephibosheth by King David

The restoration that the king bestows upon the “dead dog” Mephibosheth seems to be much more than a required gesture of covenant loyalty. King David first restores him by returning “all” of the land of his father and grandfather. This gives him economic stability, since in an agrarian culture, the land and the ability to grow crops were essential for status and survival. King David’s actions extend beyond merely restoring financial blessing back to Mephibosheth for the rest of his life. King David, in essence, also raises Mephibosheth from death to life, both emotionally and socially. The respect and honor that King David restores back to Mephibosheth is exceptional. King David, unlike Ziba who refers to Mephibosheth as a “crippled son” of Jonathan, King David addresses him by name, which in and of itself is a gesture of honor and respect. This is a courtesy usually not extended to PWD within scripture. In truth, this seems to be the only place within the canon of scripture, with the exception of Bartimaeus the blind man,¹⁰ where a person with a disability is called by their name, and not solely described by their condition.

Additionally, the fact that the king would kindly welcome a member of the previous royal family is noteworthy. “Mephibosheth had reason to be afraid, for it was customary in the East for a new dynasty to wipe out all possible claimants from the old one, and the incident at Gibeah [see 2 Sam. 21:1-14 where David had seven members of Saul’s house killed] must have been fresh in his mind.”¹¹ Thusly, King David restored Mephibosheth from a place of deep fear for his life, to a place of complete honor by

¹⁰ See Matt 20:30 *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Biblica, Inc, 2011.

¹¹ Birch, *Interpreters Bible:2 Samuel*, 1093.

welcoming him into his presence and calls him by name, when he spoke the words, “Do not fear.” It is very common for PWD to feel fearful and out of place around people who, in the eyes of others have acquired status and power, because PWD seemingly have very little within our current culture context.

In addition, King David sent for Mephibosheth to be taken out of Lo-Debar, a physical location that is identified with the word “pasture less,” a place where there were no crops¹². Also, the name Mephibosheth itself means, “one that brings shame.”¹³ Surely, these two facts just added to the negative stigma that Mephibosheth, as a representative of the disabled community, must have felt. Revivalist evangelist Leif Hetland, who is closely associated with ANGA, and has led over one million Muslims to Christ, rightly notes that Mephibosheth suffered with “an orphan spirit.”¹⁴

This corresponds to his feelings of worthlessness which is on display when he refers to himself as not just a “dog,” a term used in that culture when one wanted to be humble in the presence of royalty, but “a dead dog”, which is a term of extreme self-abasement.¹⁵ Like so many people with disabilities today, Mephibosheth would have likely felt useless and insignificant to the king within his palace, since he could not physically contribute to it in the same way the other members of the royal court could. Another scholar has reinforced this opinion by noting how Mephibosheth’s reference to

¹² James Strong, *New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: with Main Concordance, Appendix to the Main Concordance, Hebrew and Aramaic Dictionary of the Old Testament, Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*, comfort print ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), 67.

¹³ Anderson, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 70.

¹⁴ Leif Hetland, 11:00 a.m. Session of Global Awakening’s Kingdom Foundations Conference (Sermon, New Life Church, Virginia Beach, VA, May 18, 2018.)

¹⁵ P. Kyle McCarter, *The Anchor Bible*, vol. 9, *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984), 261.

himself as a, “. . . dead dog is unnecessarily disparaging, and reflects what would now be regarded as a morbid self-image, induced perhaps by his disability.”¹⁶

The final, and perhaps most impactful aspect of Mephibosheth’s restoration, is King David’s declaration to Mephibosheth that he shall, “eat at my table regularly.” This declaration amounts to honoring Mephibosheth, by promoting him to the status of a son, in that he regularly dined at the king’s table. The King James Version says that he “will eat bread from my table continually.” This is especially powerful, given that bread has been employed as a metaphor for healing in the scripture (Matt 15:19). “This special mark of favor is the more noteworthy on account of Mephibosheth’s physical imperfection. . . the man had doubtless been made to feel that he was a useless member of the family, and was all the more grateful for kind treatment.”¹⁷

Thus, King David gave Mephibosheth access to social, financial, and emotional healing. This foreshadows what the *hesed* of Christ, who on behalf of the LORD, does for His children, both allowing them to administrate and receive the bread of healing. Thus, Mephibosheth went from a place of barrenness and shame, to place of honor and dignity, by taking his position as a member of the royal house because of the *hesed* shown to him by King David.

New Testament Biblical Foundations

The NT study will look at the larger context of (1 Cor 12:4-27), which has to do with the distribution of the various gifts of the Spirit for the common good. The focus of

¹⁶ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, vol. 8, *1 and 2 Samuel: an Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 228.

¹⁷ H. P. Smith, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Books of Samuel in The International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1899), 311.

the exegesis will be on the verses, which deal with the gifts of Word of Knowledge and healings (1 Cor 12:8-9), and then on verses about giving greater honor to the parts of the body of Christ that lack it (1 Cor 12:23-24). The reason for the focus on these specific verses has to do with the subject of the Doctor of Ministry project, which will include teaching PWD how to prophecy and heal the sick, by receiving Words of Knowledge and using the Five-Step Prayer Model, thus affirming PWD as honored gifts to the Body of Christ, who are also graced with the power of the Holy Spirit for ministry.

Contextual Background: Spiritual Gifts and Unity in the Body

Corinth was an important port city in the Roman world as a center of commerce and trade, which is likely why Paul chose the location to plant a local church. The city was accessible on the major trade routes and the influence of the Gospel could spread relatively quickly from that region. Another reason why Paul likely chose Corinth was because it was a spiritual hub, with many temples to Greek and Roman gods. This gave Paul and the subsequent Christian community plenty of opportunities to directly challenge the religious order of the day, which we see Paul doing as he established the Church in Corinth (Acts 18). Because Corinthian believers lived in such a pagan culture of dissenting spiritual belief and practice, it is not surprising that they struggled with issues of disunity, immorality, and carnality in the practice of their newfound spirituality.

Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth is broken down into five main sections, which correlate to five controversies that arose after Paul had moved on and was

establishing other churches throughout the Roman Empire.¹⁸ The five problem areas that Paul brought correction to include problems with division amongst religious leadership (chapters 1-4), the problem of sexual immorality (chapters 5-7), cultural and religious problems (chapters 8-10), the problem of disunity and disorder at their worship gatherings (chapters 11-14), and the problem of their faulty view of the resurrection (chapter 15). The biblical passages most relevant to this thesis (1 Cor. 12:7-9 and 24b) will be examined in the section pertaining to the Corinthian church's problems with their worship gatherings, and in particular over their problems of disunity and disorder over their practice of spiritual gifts.

Spiritual Gifts for the Common Good (1 Cor. 12:7-11)

In Paul's correction of the Corinthian Church's abuse of spiritual gifts as well as in his appeal to have them practice the gifts in a way that brings order and unity to the Body of Christ, he provides a non-exhaustive list of manifestations, which are given by the Holy Spirit to individual believers for the edification of the Church.¹⁹ 1 Cor. 12:7-11 states,

But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another *various* kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

¹⁸ Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993), 10-11.

¹⁹ Kistemaker, *First Corinthians*, 420.

The first subject to be explored here is how to group, or classify, this list of nine gifts, which this author sees as essential. There have been many attempts to categorize or classify the nine gifts of the spirit into specific groupings. Dr. Gordon Fee states that a common grouping is, one - gifts of instruction (wisdom and knowledge), two - gifts of supernatural power (faith, healings, miracles), and three - gifts of inspired utterance (prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues).²⁰ One cannot overstate that these groupings are not exhaustive but that Paul's use of this list, as well as his other writings where spiritual gifts are discussed (Rom. 12:6–8; 1 Cor. 12:4–11; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11), are ad hoc, or for the purpose of the argument at hand.²¹ In other words, it is not the items in the list that are most important, but the fact that this is a sample of gifts that are available to the people of God, which He gives for their common good.

Of the nine gifts mentioned in 1 Cor. 12:7-11, the two *charismata* that are most pertinent to this thesis and project include, one - The *logos gnoseos* or “the word of knowledge,” and two - The *charismata iamatōn*, which translates “gifts of healings.” These two manifestations have been chosen because their effects can be immediately measured on the human body to a degree. This idea lends itself to a qualitative study in the action research model. Additionally, Dr. Randy Clark teaches that these two gifts often work in tandem, as “. . . a word of knowledge builds faith in the person who needs

²⁰ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 590.

²¹ Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (Nottingham, England: Eerdmans, 2010), 573.

healing and also in the person who received the word of knowledge.”²² This notion is demonstrated through the five-step prayer model that Dr. Clark has championed for many years. Throughout the process of praying for a person while utilizing this model, Dr. Clark maintains that one must cooperate with the Holy Spirit. This is accomplished through receiving accurate and specific Words of Knowledge about the person’s condition from the Holy Spirit and then immediately trying to confirm what one hears by asking the person for confirmation. This result then leads to the operation of the gifts of healings as the faith of both the person praying and the person being prayed for are activated as a result of the Words of Knowledge. This method has been effectively used in healing meetings in various parts of the United States and around the world, and is a model that this author has used with great effect, as well as the model that he will teach in the Doctor of Ministry project. These two gifts will be defined and discussed below.

There are at least two different views of the definition and nature of the gift of the Word of Knowledge. One definition commonly taught by Pentecostals and Charismatics is that the gift of the Word of Knowledge is a function of the gift of prophecy. Gordan Fee says that what Paul has in mind is a, “. . . supernatural endowment of knowledge, factual information that could not otherwise have been known without the Spirit’s aid.”²³ Dr. Clark agrees and defines the gift as, “. . . a supernatural revelation of information that is given by the Holy Spirit. It is not something that the person who gets the word knows by their own (physical) senses, rather, it is supernaturally revealed by the Holy Spirit.”²⁴

²² Randy Clark, *Words of Knowledge* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Global Awakening, 2012), 3.

²³ Fee, *First Corinthians* 593.

²⁴ Clark, *Knowledge*, 2.

Juxtaposed to the Pentecostal definition of the Word of Knowledge expressed by Fee and Clark is the Reformed Evangelical view. Those who hold to this view seem to favor a definition of the Word of Knowledge as, “. . . a message marked by theological understanding, including an understanding based on (Spirit-inspired) study of Scripture.”²⁵ In this way, they demythologize the gift by seeing it as inspired teaching based on study of Scripture, and not supernatural knowledge gained directly from the Holy Spirit. Former Regent University professor and systematic theologian J. Rodman Williams seems to reach for a middle ground between these two positions by stating that the gift of the Word of Knowledge is, “. . . more than a knowledge to be gained from even the most thorough biblical study; it is deeper knowledge, which, while based on such study, is brought directly to the human mind by the Holy Spirit.”²⁶ He seems to define the gift as both a spoken message, based on scriptural knowledge, as well as, direct spiritual agency. However, he disagrees with the view espoused by Fee and Clark about how the Word of Knowledge relates to hidden facts within a human situation, like a revelation that someone in the room has a particular disease or sickness. Williams suggests that drawing such a conclusion is “a mistake.”²⁷ While it is noted that Williams was the chief theologian of Regent University from 1982-2002, with highly respected views, but this author believes that in this case, he is mistaken. Fee and Clark’s view will be expounded upon during this project.

²⁵ Ciampa, *First Corinthians*, 576.

²⁶ J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 1996), 357.

²⁷ Williams, *Renewal Theology*, 357.

There is more than one reason why the author has taken the Pentecostal position with regard to the Word of Knowledge. For example, the volume of personal experience demonstrates that this author has seen and participated in clearly show that God often gifts people with “Words of Knowledge” that consist entirely of personal information to bring miraculous healing to people.²⁸ So my question to those who hold the Reformed Evangelical view about the Word of Knowledge is, what should one call the giving of spontaneous personal information by God that is not directly related to the study of the Scriptures?

Those who support a Reformed Evangelical view critique the Pentecostal view of the gift by stating, “The assumption that the (word of) knowledge must be something that could not be humanly discerned is based on a grace-nature dichotomy that assumes that what is truly spiritual must be completely distinct from our human abilities.”²⁹ The study and understanding of Scripture is certainly, and should be central in the application and interpretation of any messages where the Word of Knowledge are uttered, but the revelation of the Word of Knowledge does not come by the study of Scripture. These words come directly from God to the prophetic vessel through the agency of the Holy Spirit. To suggest that those who take the Pentecostal position on the Word of Knowledge are falsely divorcing intellectual understanding from supernatural revelation completely miss the point and are building a strawman argument. The way the Word of Knowledge are received always involves human faculty in some measure, simply because a person tasked with delivering the word has to utilize their mind in order to first receive

²⁸ One of the greatest practitioners of this gift was the late healing evangelist Kathryn Kuhlman, as just one example of many

²⁹ Ciampa, *First Corinthians*, 576.

the image, thought, or impression, as well as using their mind to express what God is trying to communicate to His people. So, unlike the Reformed Evangelical view, Pentecostals hold to a view that does not limit God or binds His work to limited understanding about the Scriptures. This author believes the Holy Spirit has never stopped giving revelatory truth.

The crux of the problem with the Reformed Evangelical view is that holders of this view perhaps lack an experience and understanding of the prophetic gift that is active and alive today. They seem to have a primarily historical perspective of the prophetic gifts, meaning that they view the prophet today as an expositor of Torah, rather than someone gifted with immediate inspiration. In other words, they see the Holy Spirit as a divine teacher of the Scripture rather than the direct, divine giver of all truth. Equal attention should be given to the Holy Spirit as divine teacher as well as one who can give revelatory knowledge in the moment, informed by the Scriptures but not dependent upon them. Jesus says in the Gospel of John, “But the Advocate, the **Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in my name, **will teach you all** things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:26). The non-charismatic Reformed Evangelical view seems to fail at grasping the full implications of this truth, and thus they limit the Holy Spirit’s truth revealing primarily to the illumination of Scripture. To say that The Church always has to rely on the Scripture as the mode of delivery of the Word of Knowledge is too narrow of a definition of what constitutes the Word of Knowledge. It is commonly said by evangelicals that God won’t go beyond the word (Scripture). While this may be true, the Scripture also speaks of the revelatory ministry of the Holy Spirit, thereby inferring that God is not bound to our intellectual understanding of the Scripture.

Gifts of Healings

One of the most noteworthy aspects of Jesus' ministry was that of healing the sick. He went about healing all who were sick and oppressed by the Devil (Acts 10:38). In 1 Cor 12, Paul states how there are differing categories and kinds of healing by his use of the term *charismata iamatōn* ("gifts of healings"). The classical understanding of this gift is that healings is primarily physical and instantaneous in nature. A more modern view is that healings here also include healing in the natural, emotional, physical and social realms.³⁰ However, if one wants to strictly adhere to what the textual evidence seems to indicate then, "There can be little doubt that Paul understands these healings to be as miraculous as those of the Lord Jesus himself."³¹ The mode of healing that will be explored in this project is the manifestation of physical healing. The main reason for this approach is because it is the easiest to measure with regard to healing prayer.

Classically, there are two schools of thought regarding the gifts of healing. One is constitutional, and one is situational. The former refers to the belief that certain people within the Body of Christ are gifted to heal certain diseases and sicknesses. Proponents of this view typically believe that individuals are gifted in healing certain categories of disease such as Multiple Sclerosis or cancer. On the other hand, those who hold to the situational view believe the gifts are available to all believers as needed. The imagery that is used to describe this is a picture of the spiritual gift as a tool in the believer's tool belt that can be taken out of the tool bag and used by the believer at any given moment,

³⁰ D A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: a Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Book House, 1987), 39.

³¹ Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 39.

depending upon what is needed. Dr. Clark masterfully holds these two views in tension when he categorically states that all believers are empowered by the Lord to heal the sick, while also maintaining that one might find themselves particularly gifted in a specific area of healing ministry.³² For the purposes of this project, the situational view will be emphasized however one must never lose sight of the fact that the Lord may anoint some with a constitutional gifting. The reason for this is that the people coming to get trained in the project may not have any experience with healing the sick. Therefore, it will be important to emphasize that the ability to heal the sick is available to all believers.

God Gives Abundant Honor to the Parts That Lack It

The exegesis will now shift from a discussion of the gifts the Word of Knowledge and healings to how unity in the Body of Christ is maintained by the diverse members working for the common good, and more specifically, how God has given greater honor to the parts of the body that lack it, so that there would be no division. In the following key verses are quoted from 1 Cor. 12:20-25 Paul states,

But now there are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; or again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

Although there is debate amongst scholars as to whether or not the “weaker” and “less presentable” members refer to the low-status members of the community, there is a

³² Bill Johnson and Randy Clark, *The Essential Guide to Healing: Equipping All Christians to Pray for the Sick* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2011), 1.

strong textual support of the view “was a perceived correlation between social stratification and the stratification of the gifts.”³³ Regardless of whether social status is the main dynamic in view here or not, on the whole it seems Paul’s major concern in this section, as is the case in the entire chapter, is that the Christians at Corinth would stop being divided by all that separated them including both social status as well as the unbalanced practice of the spiritual gifts. Paul is urging all parts of the body to see themselves as vital to its health and to function interdependently. In the section leading up to the quote above, Paul describes the true nature of the body as it was divinely ordained: which Fee sums succinctly when he states that,

. . . all members (parts of the body) are necessary if there is to be a body and not a monstrosity. . . (*Paul*) argues that the apparently weaker, the internal organs, are the more necessary, and that the apparently less seemly, the sexual organs, are accorded the higher honor (of clothing being implied).³⁴

So, Paul probably has this class struggle, which was a part of the Corinthian social hierarchy, in mind when he addresses certain members and groups within the local church who were “weaker” and “less honorable.” These special members were to be treated with special honor and care, just as God Himself had done by his placement of them in the body. God can especially clothe PWD with power for the purpose of ministry, and in doing so, He acts faithfully and consistently to His nature as He, “. . . chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. . . the weak things of the world to shame the strong” (1 Cor. 1:27).

It has been made clear that both “the weak” and “less honorable” are in their own way, “in need”, but it is less clear what Paul precisely had in mind about how God would

³³ Ciampa, *First Corinthians*, 605.

³⁴ Fee, *First Corinthians*, 609.

give “greater honor” to the parts that showed lack.³⁵ This author will make the case for an important application: – that “greater honor” can refer to the LORD pouring out His power and anointing on PWD for important functions in the body of Christ. In the context of this project the term “greater honor” means empowerment of the Holy Spirit of PWD for operating in the gifts of the Words of Knowledge and healing the sick. Commenting on this verse, Ciampa and Rosner state “[God] gives gifts that the body needs to people who might otherwise be thought of as unimportant or dispensable. Sometimes he gives such people especially desirable spiritual gifts”³⁶ This statement supports the very foundation of this project, which aims to empower PWD to see themselves as viable candidates to operate in the power of God, through the Holy Spirit, which is confirmed by the author’s personal experience. To be clear, the intention here is to see God empower believers with disabilities in the sense of empowerment for services found in (Acts 1:8) and not merely indwelling power unto faith (1 Cor. 12:13).

For example, this author has Cerebral Palsy, which significantly limits his contributions of physical labor including, such as feeding the poor or building homes. However, an act of power ministry, such as healing and prophecy is possible through the grace of the Holy Spirit. PWD are often victims of neglect within the Church in various ways, but they are most notably overlooked when it comes to participating in leadership positions. This is especially true as it pertains to performing tasks of public ministry to others, such as serving on prayer teams or public preaching and teaching. This project seeks to speak to this issue and illuminate the problem so that it can be addressed within a

³⁵ Fee, *First Corinthians*, 614.

³⁶ Ciampa, *First Corinthians*, 606.

local church context. As stated above, the author is unable to perform many tasks that are traditionally taken on by church leaders, however ministry in the Holy Spirit such as prophecy and healing are areas that the author has been found to be particularly gifted in. Since God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34) the author believes that with training, PWD will be equipped for ministry within their local church contexts in meaningful and powerful ways.

Summary and Conclusion

The Tanakh exegesis has shown that the Hebrew term *hesed* (lovingkindness) is a rich and strong covenantal word, which is at the heart and center of the theme found in 2 Sam 9. Additionally, the total restoration of Mephibosheth, which was able to take place because of King David's loyalty to his covenant with Jonathan, foreshadows what the *hesed* of Christ does for His children. The *hesed* of Christ both allows them to administer and receive the bread of healing. This is the metaphor used by Jesus when he was describing the LORDS covenant with Israel in (Matt 15:26-28). Thus, King David gave Mephibosheth access to social, financial, and emotional healing. Mephibosheth went from a place of barrenness and shame, to place of honor and dignity, as he took his position as a member of the royal house through the *hesed* shown to him by King David. This same kind of *hesed* is given in the Church by Christ, is recorded in John's Gospel, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).

The NT exegesis has shown that there were divisions among the different strata within society in Corinth. Apparently, the Corinthian church was also divided along

socio-economic lines as well as overemphasis on the power gifts without the essential ingredient for all spiritual gifts which is agape love (1 Cor. 13). In the Corinthian church, PWD would likely have been the lower strata of society. This author proposes that one of the ways God seeks to heal this recurring problem of division is by anointing PWD with His Spirit to exercise gifts of prophecy and healing, thereby making them indispensable to the rest of the Body of Christ. This is one contemporary way the LORD shows *hesed* to the Body of Christ. Those who do not believe that the empowerment gifts are in operation today miss a vital expression of *hesed*, which maybe one of the reasons that there continues to be so many divisions still within the modern North American Protestant church.

Throughout the biblical exegesis one can see that there was a cultural and religious systemic bias toward PWD that ran through the Hebraic culture and appeared in the pages of Scripture itself. This can now be found in present day local churches where very few PWD can be found because of the bias. Although some progress has been made through different ministry outreaches toward the disabled very few empower them for ministry. As previously stated it is hoped that this project would directly challenge and begin to conquer the cultural systemic bias in the Charismatic/Pentecostal tradition that seemingly presumes that certain people are limited to receiving power ministry because of their physical disabilities.

In this project, the author will first acknowledge the emotional plight that those with lifelong disabilities tend to suffer. PWD are often overlooked or made to feel like they are a burden to the able-bodied world. This can lead to frustration, anger, and low self-esteem. God has recently given this author the opportunity to face the challenge of

processing difficult emotions related to this stigma as well as healing him emotionally. In the process God seems to be giving the author more empathy for the disabled community and is reconnecting him with the purpose of empowering them in supernatural ministry. This is a new call on the author's life, since for most of his journey he avoided being identified with the "disabled community" as much as possible, as he perceived them to be overly content to live limited by their disability.

It is hypothesized that if disabled believers are empowered and trained to demonstrate the supernatural gospel in the presence of local pastors in the charismatic/revival stream the PWD will realized they can also be used by God supernaturally, and the pastors will realize that disable persons can be used supernaturally, and any systemic bias in the participating pastors against using PWD.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

This author's ministry context consists of prophetic evangelism and training to the general and disabled communities of Hampton Roads, Virginia. COFM aims to reach people through the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, primarily by imparting the power of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands, deliverance, healing, preaching as well as teaching salvation. The project associated with this thesis seeks to build a bridge between the disabled community and the revival stream of Christianity as proclaimed by the Revival Alliance¹ with the ultimate goal of bringing the supernatural Kingdom of God within reach of disabled believers, not only as people to be ministered to, but also as people delivering effective ministry through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Helen Keller has been chosen as the author's historical figure because he shares a common desire with her to see disabled people excel, despite their limitations. Keller wanted to make the plight of persons with disabilities (PWD) known and to see them excel in education, as well as make strides into all social aspects of society. Keller did this with excellence as she was a pioneer in becoming one of the first world famous disabled persons known in modernity, if not the very first. She was, arguably, the first disabled person who blazed trails and broke through ceilings in a way that made her a

¹The Revival Alliance is comprised of six couples, each with corresponding networks of churches, ministries, and leaders. They are John and Carrol Arnott, Randy and DeAnne Clark, Rolland and Heidi Baker, Che' and Sue Ahn, Georgian and Winnie Banov, and Beni and Bill Johnson.

disabled person who blazed trails and broke through ceilings in a way that made her a universal household name, worthy of receiving many prestigious honors, awards, and degrees throughout her life. This included being awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1964 by Lyndon B. Johnson, the highest civilian honor that a President can bestow.

Keller's impact on the world continues to be felt through the numerous books and speeches that she wrote and delivered. Keller was a staunch advocate for PWD² and was a great champion of the Braille reading system simply by being visible and recognizable wherever she found herself. She proved, even without such modern advancements brought about by the Equal Access to Education Act of 1973 and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, that people with disabilities add value, not only to their families, but also to the world at large. Very few people can claim to have had such a wide and sweeping influence on the world as Helen Keller. She met and conversed with the likes of Alexander Graham Bell, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor, Samuel L. Clemens (a.k.a Mark Twain), and other renown leaders. She traveled the world six times over and spoke on behalf of the sense-deprived everywhere, speaking not only of their plight, but also of their promise and potential. She raised millions of dollars for the cause of the blind and extended her outreach efforts to other critical social justice issues such as racism, ignorance, poverty, and women's right to vote. She even acted in movies and theatrical plays.³

² Keller's devoted a large part of her life's work speaking to people on behalf of the American Foundation for the Blind.

³ Helen Keller, *Light in My Darkness*, 2nd ed. (West Chester, PA: Chrysalis Books, 1994), 7.

This author is using Keller's story as a personal example and motivation to blaze trails to empower PWD to do things they have never done before, primarily by training them to release the healing and prophetic power of God as prayer ministers. In this chapter, the author will make and support the claim that Keller possessed at least two key features that allowed her to be successful in her transformative journey through life. The first key feature was her intimate relationship with her teacher, Anne Mansfield Sullivan. The second key feature was her inner strength, which was sourced in her spirituality. She shared about her profound love for the mystical teachings of eighteenth-century scientist, turned seer and theologian, Emmanuel Swedenborg. Regarding Swedenborg and his teachings, Keller stated that they “. . . have been my light and staff in my hand, and by his vision splendid I am attended on my way.”⁴

The first section of this chapter will be devoted to the special relationship that Keller, who was blind and deaf had with Anne Mansfield Sullivan, about whom Keller affectionately said, “My teacher is so near to me that I scarcely think of myself apart from her. How much of my delight in all beautiful things is innate, and how much is due to her influence, I can never tell.”⁵ Just as the Holy Spirit is referred to in Scripture by Jesus as “Teacher,” so too did Keller refer to Sullivan. Because Keller referred to Sullivan as “Teacher” throughout her lifetime, this chapter will at times do the same. Throughout this first section, the author will liken Keller's relationship with Teacher to how God desires all Disciples of Christ to relate to the Holy Spirit. The second section of this chapter will outline and comment on the major tenets of her personal understanding

⁴ Kelly, *Light*, 34.

⁵ Helen Keller, *The Story of My Life* (New York, NY: Scholastic, 1985), 34.

and applications of the doctrines of the Emmanuel Swedenborg's New Church, or otherwise known as Swedenborgianism. These two parts will combine in a summary and conclusion, which will explain how the study of Helen Keller's relationship to Sullivan and her spirituality will be foundational to the anticipated Doctor of Ministry project.

Helen and Teacher

Many people know Keller from the movie, "The Miracle Worker," which showcases how she was taught by Anne Sullivan that all objects have names, which led to her knowing how to spell out words. There is a famous scene in the movie that depicts the moment of Helen's mental awakening, when she was brought out of her life of perpetual darkness and brought into the light of human experience. Everyone who knows Keller's story remembers her "eye opening" experience at the water pump, but what many people may not fully appreciate is the degree of dedication and sacrificial love that Keller's teacher showed to her everyday over their nearly fifty year relationship.

Helen Keller was born a normal, healthy child on June 27, 1880, to two loving and relatively well to do parents in Tuscumbia, Alabama. Her father, Arthur Henley Keller, was a former captain in the Confederate Army, and her mother, Catherine Everett (Adams) Keller, was known as "Kate." Helen was thought to have been very gifted and bright. She learned to walk at just one year old. She was a very inquisitive child who wanted to know about anything and everything. Keller stated that she had one full year of wonderful experiences, but tragically, in February of 1881, she was diagnosed with an illness, the nature about which, physicians continue to disagree. Her illness was classified at the time as an acute congestion of the brain, which she experienced around the age of

nineteen months. Some modern physicians think that she may have suffered a bad case of cerebral meningitis. Whatever the cause, Helen was left completely blind and deaf, and would eventually become unable to speak because her memory of language faded.

Because of the physical as well as intellectual darkness in which she lived, Keller was known as a problem child in her earliest years. One illustration of this occurred when the young Keller recounted getting jealous of her baby sister's use of the cradle into which Keller would always place her doll. Keller purposely turned over the cradle, with her baby sister in it, and the baby fell dangerously to the ground. Fortunately, her mother quickly recovered the baby and she wasn't hurt.⁶ Her parents became very upset with Helen after the incident and contacted Alexander Graham Bell, who at the time, was quite interested in the plight of the visually and hearing impaired. Keller's parents thought that Bell might be able to recommend a course of action for them to take. Bell encouraged the Keller's to contact the Perkins School for the Blind in Boston, at this writing is still in operation today, which proved to be a most advantageous event in Helen's life. Anne Sullivan came from that school to live with Helen to become her teacher. Keller would ultimately learn the gift of language, which would enable her to live with an abiding sense of love, peace, and companionship for the next fifty years of her life.

Anne Sullivan, sometimes hereafter referred to as Teacher, came to Helen in the Spring of 1887, when she was only twenty years of age and literally invested nearly every minute of the next fifty years of her life into Helen. Sullivan herself was vision impaired. She would eventually teach Helen the "finger game," as Helen would call it, teaching Keller that every sign she made in her hand had meaning. It was a few weeks after

⁶ Keller, *My Life*, 15.

Teacher arrived that, in frustration, she took Keller to the water pump and put Helen's hand under the spigot, pumping furiously with one arm. As water dropped onto Helen's hand, she spelled with word w-a-t-e-r with her other hand, which Helen described as her "mental awakening." Of this watershed moment, Keller wrote,

I think it was an experience somewhat in the nature of a revelation. I showed immediately in many ways that a great change had taken place in me. I wanted to learn the name of every object I touched and before night I had mastered thirty words. Nothingness was blotted out! I felt joyous, strong, equal to my limitations! Delicious sensations rippled through me, and sweet, strange things that were locked up in my heart began to sing.⁷

As the relationship between Helen and Anne Sullivan demonstrates, if one individual is willing to yield their life completely to another, then great and wonderful revelations can and will take place. Keller survived solely on instinct until her teacher came into her life. Governed by her passions, she had no connection to her family members except for her most basic and primal needs. She had no concept of love or affection. These same dynamics often take place in a new believer when they are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Until a sinner comes to Christ for salvation, they are governed by their fleshly passions, but when the Holy Spirit comes, there is an immediate love and affection, as well as a potential for one to transcend their primal passions.

During Helen's early instruction, which took place from the time she was six years old to eight years old, she was informally but effectively taught by Teacher. Miss Sullivan's practical way of teaching Keller proved to be an invaluable foundation for her later educational success. Keller first attended the Perkins School for the Blind from 1888-1893, followed by another special school in New York, which led to her attending college prep school in Cambridge, Massachusetts, before finally entering Radcliffe

⁷ Keller, *Light*, 21.

University at the age of twenty.⁸ Throughout Keller's years of education, Miss Sullivan was either, instructing the teachers how to teach Helen, using the manual, one-handed alphabet or sitting beside her pupil, putting her hands on the lips of the instructor's lips so that she could understand the lecture material. Miss Sullivan was to Helen as the Holy Spirit is the believer. She came alongside her and guided her, step by step, through the most basic of processes. She would spell out lectures into her hands, she advocated for Helen when necessary, as well as standing by her side at all times. This perfectly illustrates the Holy Spirits relationship to the believer; He is our "advocate" – the One who comes alongside and guides us into all truth, guarding and protecting us (John 14:26).

A scary moment occurred when Helen and Teacher were out walking close to the family property and Helen, with the help of her teacher, climbed into a tree.⁹ Leaving Helen in the tree after she assured Teacher that she would not try to climb down, Teacher went to retrieve her lunch in the house. While Teacher was gone, a storm suddenly blew in. Keller describes this event as one of the scariest episodes of her life and would have fallen out of the tree if she had not been holding on with a death grip. Just as she was about to fall, she felt the warm embrace of her teacher. This is comparable to how believers experience storms throughout life and just when it is thought that all is lost, the Holy Spirit comes and either changes the circumstances. (Matt. 8:26)

The reason Helen believed that she was able to learn so well under Teacher was because Sullivan never taught her in a conventionally laborious way. Rather, she made

⁸ Joseph P. Lash, *Helen And Teacher: The Story of Helen Keller And Anne Sullivan Macy (Radcliffe Biography Series)*, (New York, NY: Delacorte Press, 1980), inside cover.

⁹ Keller, *My Life*, 22.

everything a game¹⁰. For instance, if Helen was learning about geography, Teacher would make models of mountains or a river, allowing Helen to touch the ridges of the mountain and the tactile contours of the river. She had a way of skipping over the tedious details in order to keep Helen focused on the point of the lesson. Throughout the history of the Church, the Holy Spirit has been slowly teaching His people in practical and even “tactile” ways, this can be seen in the way He teaches His people to pray for the sick. The project associated with this paper will utilize a tactile learning model between the believer and the Holy Spirit, which is called the Five-Step Prayer model.

Among the many difficult challenges that Teacher helped Keller through in her young life were two significant ones that highlight how important Sullivan was to Keller. In the winter of 1892, Keller began to learn how to speak. Also, in that same time period, she wrote a story which was entitled “The Frost King.” It was later determined that she must have plagiarized the story as it was very similar to another story which contained stories about Jack Frost called, “The Frost Fairies,” by Margaret Canby.¹¹ She had originally sent her story to Mr. Anagnos of the Perkins school who, up to this point, had always been kind and encouraging to Helen, but in this case, he ended up disciplining Keller for her alleged offense. Keller described this incident as the darkest time of her childhood because it brought reproach not only on her, but on her teacher as well, which Helen dreaded more than anything. This reflects the heart of a true and honest believer who is walking with the Holy Spirit. God says, “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God” (Eph. 4:30).

¹⁰ Keller, *My Life*, 31.

¹¹ Keller, *My Life*, 54.

Helen was eventually cleared of any wrong doing. The only defense that she had was that she had not remembered The Frost Fairies having been read to her but concedes in her autobiography that she must have heard it, for both stories were so similar.

Although Helen was cleared, her relationship with Mr. Anagnos was never the same as he felt that Keller and her teacher had deceived him to win his admiration. Speaking of this traumatic experience Helen stated “As I lay in my bed that night, I wept as I hope few children have wept. I felt so cold, I imagined I should die before morning. . .”¹² This represented a sort of dark night of the soul for Keller and may be comparable to those believers who have felt like the Holy Spirit has abandoned them in their time of trouble. However, if one goes through the refiner’s fire, as Keller did with Sullivan by her side, they will be able to overcome terrible times and move forward in life.

The second difficult experience was when sixteen-year-old Keller enrolled in the Gilman School for Young Ladies in preparation to attend Radcliffe.¹³ Due to lack of reading material in braille, Headmaster Gilman saw that it would be impossible for Keller to cover the same material at the pace of the other girls, so he wanted her to stay at the school an additional three years. This grieved Keller because she wanted to graduate with her peers. Teacher and Keller’s mother decided to pull her out of the school and continue her education using tutors. Ultimately, Helen found this to be much more agreeable, as her tutors were able to take time with her in order to make sure she understood the material. Just as Helen was led by Teacher through a difficult season at the Gilman school, the Holy Spirit will sometimes guide believers through paths that do not make

¹² Keller, *My Life*, 55.

¹³ Keller, *My Life*, 75.

sense to one's natural mind. Afterward, the situation may make perfect sense and the process may become more clear.

The special relationship between Keller and Teacher is one of the purest non-sexual relationships that can be found outside of the pages of Scripture. Of her teacher, Helen affectionately wrote, "My teacher is so near to me that I scarcely think of myself apart from her. How much of my delight in all beautiful things is innate, and how much is due to her influence, I can never tell."¹⁴ Likewise, Jesus taught the Holy Spirit, is a friend that sticks closer than a brother, and He brought his light and presence to Helen Keller through the ministry of the Anne Sullivan.

Keller and Swedenborg

Helen's father was an active deacon in the family's local Presbyterian Church and her mother was a practicing Episcopalian. Given such a background, Keller tried many times to explain to others why Swedenborgianism appealed to her. She reflects on this by stating,

I have many times tried to recall the feelings that led me to take Swedenborg's interpretation of Christianity rather than my father's Presbyterianism, but I find no satisfactory answer . . . I do not know whether I adopted the faith or the faith adopted me. I can only say that the heart of the young girl sitting with a big book of raised letters on her lap . . . was thrilled by radiant presence and inexpressibly endearing voice.¹⁵

Emmanuel Swedenborg was born in 1688 in Sweden during the period known as the Enlightenment. He had his first experience with the supernatural when he was four years old. Keller writes that he purported to his Lutheran parents that he was having

¹⁴ Keller, *My Life*, 34.

¹⁵ Keller, *Light*, 33.

visions and visitations from Heaven. His father, a Lutheran minister, was supportive. His mother, however, strongly rebuked his father for his support of their son's experiences. Her rational approach to life and spirituality won the day and Swedenborg did not have another vision until he was fifty-six years old.¹⁶

When Keller was thirteen years of age she started to become curious about religious and spiritual matters. Teacher took her to Bishop Philip Brooks of Trinity Church in Boston because she persistently asked religious questions. Of this experience Keller recalls,

Bishop Brooks told me the wonderful story of Jesus Christ, and my eyes filled with tears, and my heart beat with love for the gentle Nazarene . . . I felt that the Lord's arms were about the whole world. . . I felt more and more his life deepening down into mine, and I found more and more to be glad of in the world.¹⁷

Additionally, during this time, Helen met a man by the name of John Hitz, who was the Consulate General for Switzerland. He would prove to be one of her most intimate friends and would also introduce her to the teachings of Swedenborg. The first book that Helen read of Swedenborg's was "Heaven and Hell." She stated that she read a testimony of a blind woman that really impacted her, which was followed by a revelation of her own,

My heart gave a joyous bound. Here was a faith that emphasized what I felt so keenly – the separateness between soul and body, between the realm I could picture as a whole and the chaos of fragmentary things . . . that my limited physical senses met at every turn . . . I felt God as close to me as when Bishop Brooks and I talked about Christ.¹⁸

¹⁶ Keller, *Light*, 40.

¹⁷ Keller, *Light*, 24.

¹⁸ Keller, *Light*, 31-32.

One of the chief elements of Swedenborg's teaching was his emphasis on the reality of the spiritual world. One can see why this would be so appealing to a blind and deaf person such as Keller who no doubt saw heaven as the ultimate escape from her perpetual soundless and sightless world. So real was heaven to Keller that she wrote, “. . . immense fields of glorious work and endless interest await all of us who are faithful over few tasks here. Occupations in the kingdom of uses . . . are infinitely varied.”¹⁹

Another major doctrine that the New Church emphasizes, which Keller found appealing, was that of universalism. Keller, unlike many people today, actually read the Bible from beginning to end, several times, but in her reading, she never could reconcile the presentation of God in the Tanakh and NT. She could not understand how God could punish sinners so severely by throwing them into an endless hell, and so it was only when she read the teaching of Swedenborg that she says she began to understand these stories in context of her version of a loving God. Swedenborg really disliked those who held to a literal interpretation of the Bible because he thought that Scripture merely contained the words of God. He did not believe that every word was inspired, but that the Bible contained truth if one knew how to interpret it correctly. Keller stated “The first and last thought of Swedenborg throughout his theological writings is to show that in the Bible, rightly read and interpreted, is to be found the truest and noblest conception of God possible.”²⁰ One can see why Keller embraced the Universalist teachings of the New Church because of her belief that God is love, and that she could not reconcile the harsher

¹⁹ Keller, *Light*, 101.

²⁰ Keller, *Light*, 67.

Hebrew Biblical depictions of the LORD with the teachings of the gentle Nazarene, until she was introduced to the doctrines of Swedenborg.

In her embrace of universalism, Keller believed that Christ's death on the cross was effective in saving all people, in all times, and all places. A colloquial expression is that all paths lead to God, and thusly Keller believed that all faiths contained a measure of truth. Therefore, if the proponent of a particular faith earnestly followed their teaching and practices of their "religion," one would ultimately reach heaven. The New Church's doctrine of Hell states that only those who do not follow the teachings of their respective religion end up in hell. Even if they go to hell, there is mercy available. To this end, Keller wrote about special societies that care for those in hell, ". . . to keep guard over those who inhabit hell and prevent them from tormenting each other beyond endurance, and thus to lessen their sense of misery as far as may be possible."²¹ This author offers that Swedenborg and Keller were guilty of what has been referred to as "buffet Christianity," like when a person picks and chooses doctrines that are meaningful, at the expense of keeping the whole counsel of Scripture, within context. It is true that, God is a loving parent but a loving parent must, at times discipline a child.

This author, who is confined to a wheelchair understands and sympathizes with Keller's desire to escape from her physical bondages. There are many aspects of Keller's beliefs that the author can relate to. Jesus does promise fields and property to those that follow Him, so heaven is going to be a real tactile and physical place (Luke 18:29-30). Admittedly, the Bible does not give a full exposition into the details of what precisely heaven is like. In Swedenborgianism, Keller would eventually escape her earthly prison

²¹ Keller, *Light*, 102.

of blindness and deafness. She found the physical reality of heaven particularly appealing because, in her estimation heaven would not only be devoid of physical limitations, but she would be compensated in heaven for the experiences that she lacked on earth, like being married and having children. During her time on earth, Keller, whether she realized it or not, experienced a measure of recompense as she traveled around the world six times over, ministering mercy and grace to people she encountered. She transcended her circumstances and brought hope and love to countless numbers of people. She continues to do so through her writings and speeches that today can still publicly accessed.

PWD expectantly long for a spiritual world where they will be freed from their limitations and exercise the ability to move freely and without hindrance. That is precisely what the author's experience is when working with the Holy Spirit. The author aims for this project to release the anointing of the Holy Spirit to other PWD, so that they may prophesy and heal the sick. The author believes that these people will operate supernaturally by transcending their physical limitations in order to become one with the Triune God. One way that PWD can find relief from their physical bondages and pain is by ministering to others in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

Keller possessed at least two key factors that allowed her to cope with her disabilities and become successful through her transformative life journey. The first was the intimate relationship with her teacher Anne Mansfield Sullivan, and the second was her firm sense of an unseen, eternal, and spiritual world, based on the writings of Emmanuel Swedenborg. The author has presented several examples of how the

interactions between Keller and Teacher parallel the way that the Bible reveals how the Holy Spirit desires to relate with believers. Additionally, while the author has noted that Swedenborg's universalism flies directly in the face of orthodox Christian teaching, his revelatory teaching did in fact provide a rare example in Keller's day of a way for her to tap into the spiritual and eternal realm. Without the spiritual focus of Swedenborgianism, Keller may have fallen into hopelessness, due to her severe disabilities.

PWD often exhibit an inner life like that of Helen Keller before Teacher came. Many of them feel trapped, isolated, misunderstood, and in utter internal darkness. Many struggle with depression, anxiety, which causes them to never venture outside of their comfort zones because they have no one to encourage them to do so. The author is very fortunate that he has friends and family to show him that he is a valued member of society. However, the best person to teach PWD that they have value is not their friends or family, but the Holy Spirit. They need to realize they can hear the Holy Spirit for themselves so that they can begin the process of entrusting Him with their lives.

This intimate relationship of trust between a person and the Holy Spirit was beautifully demonstrated in the relationship between Helen and Anne Sullivan. Helen alluded to the fact that it was difficult to distinguish where Teachers' opinions ended and where hers began. This author intends to teach and model to other PWD, a way that they can function closely with the Holy Spirit in ministry. Just as it was vital that Helen had to have relied upon her teacher to be successful, so too must PWD, who are called to minister the Kingdom of God today, rely on the Holy Spirit, almost exclusively, to be successful in ministry and in life. The second key to success in Keller's life, which was explored in this chapter, was her spirituality, which was largely based on Emmanuel

Swedenborg's teachings and revelations. Emmanuel Swedenborg, an intellectual scientist turned seer, was thought by Keller to be one of the most gifted and eloquent prophets that heaven has ever produced. Although Swedenborgianism is regarded as heterodox according to evangelical teaching, one cannot deny Swedenborg's influence on Keller's spiritual formation. Keller's exposure to Swedenborg's doctrines gave her hope and comfort in the immediate presence of God, and knowledge that a literal heaven with eternal rewards awaited her. This notion grounded her in the world to come. As one scholar has noted, "She learned to accept her limitations with grace and even joy, because her heart knew that they had a purpose and that, in fact, her life could be made all the richer not despite them but *because of* them. Through these challenges, she discovered the world of spirit."²²

The story of Keller's spiritual journey teaches us how vital it is to have authentic, personal encounters with the Holy Spirit, but without the grounding of solid biblical teaching and experience, it is very easy for one to veer off the path of orthodoxy. In this project, the author aims to bring PWD into an authentic encounter with the Holy Spirit so that they may feel the love and acceptance that comes from a relationship with the gentle Nazarene and be empowered to minister to all people. By experiencing this kind of encounter, the author hopes that PWD will learn that they can partner with the Holy Spirit just as anointed "able-bodied" believers do. It is through their relationship with the Holy Spirit that their disabilities are made of none effect.

²² Jane Williams-Hogan, "Hellen Keller's Spiritual Sight," *Swedenborg Foundation*, accessed November 19, 2018, <https://swedenborg.com/scholars-helen-kellers-spiritual-sight/>.

In closing, Keller's inner life is very similar to the author's inner life in that they are both deep thinkers and feelers. Even though this author can see and hear, he has felt very isolated from people in certain circumstances. The author's chief calling in life is to be set apart to live first in the Spirit realm thereby impacting the world around him, just as Helen Keller lived her life from the Spirit within toward the outside world. In similar fashion to how Keller's spirituality helped her in this endeavor, the author's salvation and baptism in the Holy Spirit will help him achieve what God has called him to do. Keller found wide acclaim and influence on the world stage. This author's frontier is the revival alliance stream of charismatic Christianity as described earlier in this chapter, and his mission is to see PWD take their place in the five-fold ministry.

With this project, the author aims to teach PWD how to prophesy, which consists of discerning the voice of God and then repeating what is heard. Charismatic and Pentecostal Christians consider one aspect of prophetic ministry to be operating in the gift of the Word of Knowledge. PWD can and should hear God by receiving the Word of Knowledge for healing the sick. The author plans to hold a seminar to impart, teach and train PWD in this manner, in doing so, demonstrate to clergy present that PWD can serve on the ministry teams in their churches.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

This author serves as a prophetic evangelist and leader of a local ministry that is designed to reach the disabled communities of Hampton Roads, Virginia, with the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, by imparting the power of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands, and the preaching and teaching of salvation, deliverance, healing, and prophecy. The main theological theme and question related to this thesis is how to best train and equip physically disabled ministry volunteers to prophesy and heal the sick, so that they will be able to minister to the congregations they are a part of, or anyone the LORD presents to them with power. Before Jesus died, his disciples ministered under the umbrella of his anointing because the Spirit of God was with them but not yet in them.¹ After he rose from the dead, the Spirit immersed them in great power as the Gift from the Father was poured out on the Day of Pentecost.² From that point forward, the disciples dynamically preached and demonstrated the Kingdom of God with even more miraculous power than they had before. The same baptism of power is available to all physically disabled believers today who want to effectively minister by the power of God.

¹See John 14:17, *Today's New International Version*. (2005). Colorado Springs, CO: International Bible Society. John makes the distinction of the Spirit being "with them" (present reality) verses the Spirit being "in them" (future reality). Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references in this document are from Today's New International Version (TNIV).

²See Acts 2:4. The indwelling Spirit comes on the Day of Pentecost when, according to Luke, "they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues."

In his book *The Nearly Perfect Crime* Francis Mac Nutt infers that the practice of healing ministry has been stolen from the local church context. He argues that the practice of physical healing has fallen into disuse because of a lack of belief. MacNutt believes the western mindset, which holds that truth is understood through the five senses, has undermined a faith in supernatural healing. The author agrees with Mac Nutt. In this chapter, scripture and tradition will be used to make the argument for divine physical healing. The practice of the healing ministry should be utilized in the local church context. The author believes physical healing is a part of the atonement and should be understood in tandem with salvation. This means that it is just as easy to be healed as it is to be saved. All one needs to do is believe.

Paul supports this idea when he states, “But God has so composed the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.”³ In his article entitled “Disability and the Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecost and the Renewal of the Church,” Dr. Amos Yong, says, “What Paul is attempting to do in this passage... is to break down the elitist, triumphalistic, and exclusionary attitudes.”⁴ But when the full context of the chapter is considered, it is clear that Paul is talking about the spiritual gifts, which he referenced earlier in the chapter. The purpose of this chapter is to arrive at an understanding of the theological foundation for Spirit- Baptism and the essential role the Holy Spirit has in empowering disabled believers.

³ See Corinthians 12:24-25. The indwelling Spirit comes on the Day of Pentecost when, according to Luke, “they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues.”

⁴ Matt 7-8, NASB.

This chapter will be broken into three parts. The first section of this chapter will begin by examining the biblical basis for the ministry of healing. This will also present physical healing and salvation as two sides of the same coin. The second will be to review the Healing Theology as expressed through the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements will be focused on in conjunction with two testimonies from an Early Church Father, which highlight physical healing. In addition, an exploration will be made to explain the reasons for believing in the miraculous. It is the author's intention to demonstrate that belief in divine healing and salvation are linked. This means that it is just as easy to be healed as it is to be saved. All that God requires for one to be healed is belief in God's willingness to heal. This fact has a strong theological foundation and the practice of healing needs to be continued in the local church context. The third section, will discuss Disability Theology and its shortcomings, as it is currently being developed. Finally, this chapter will make an evaluation of these various positions and conclude with a new framework of teaching about the functional work of the Holy Spirit for integration into the proposed project.

History of the Ministry of Healing within the Church

Scripture and Biblical Exegesis

“But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities, the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). This passage has been interpreted in many different ways. For example, Oswalt, begins his analysis of verse five by saying, “We had thought God was

punishing this man for his own sins and failures, but in fact he was pierced through as a result of our rebellion; he was crushed on account of our twistedness.”⁵ It is widely accepted that Jesus is this suffering servant. This clearly shows that Christ was pierced for our transgressions because of our sins and Oswalt goes on to describe sin as our twistedness. The Hebrew word for “transgressions” here is *pasha*, which also means, “breach of trust and rebellion.”⁶ The Hebrew word for iniquity in this passage is *avon*. This means guilt or punishment.⁷ The Hebrew word for healing, *rapha*, in this passage, means to be healed completely, to be repaired or to be whole.⁸ Oswalt continues on his commentary,

We typically wish to make light of our ‘shortcomings,’ to explain away our ‘mistakes.’ But God will have none of it. The refusal of humanity to bow to the Creator’s rule, and our insistence on drawing up our own moral codes that pander to our lusts, are not shortcomings or mistakes. They are the stuff of death and corruption, and unless someone can be found to stand in our place, they will see us impaled on the swords of our own making and broken on the racks of our own design.⁹

According to the New Testament writers, Jesus is the suffering servant that Isaiah speaks of, one of which is Matthew. Matthew’s gospel was written specifically to the Jewish people. His purpose in writing this gospel was to provide proof that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah of Israel. One of the most frequent phrases in this gospel is, “this happened to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet,” such as Isaiah. One such prophecy

⁵ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40-66, The New International Commentary on The Old Testament (NICOT)*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 387.

⁶ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. *Hebrew and English Lexicon, Unabridged*. Electronic Database, Biblesoft, Inc. Accessed September 13, 2018. <https://biblehub.com/bdb/2617.htm>

⁷ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 730.

⁸ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 950.

⁹ Oswalt, *Isaiah Chapters 40-66*, 387.

is from Isaiah 53:5. For example, Matthew writes in Chapter 8:16-17, “When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill. This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: ‘He himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases.’”

The Greek words “asthenesia” and “nosos” are used for sicknesses and disease respectively. This is Matthew’s reinterpretation of Isaiah’s message from the Septuagint. In 1 Peter 2:24, Peter reaffirms this interpretation of Isaiah when he states, “and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.” Peter also makes reference to the wounds or stripes of Jesus in this same passage. A distinctive word of this passage is the Greek word “iaomai” for healing. This word encompasses complete physical, emotional, and spiritual healing. The Hebrew equivalent for this word is “shalom” and it means wholeness. Another Hebrew word for wholeness is rapha. The Greek word for sins is “harmatia”, and the Hebrew counterpart is “avon” which is also translated iniquities. These two gifts from Jesus, salvation and physical healing, are not inseparable, but rather inexplicably linked together; they are available to all that believe. This is confirmed by Christ when He says in Mark 14:22 and 24, “Take eat, this is my body,” speaking of the Bread of Communion and, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,” speaking of the wine, which represents His Blood, powerfully confirming the teachings of Isaiah, Matthew and Peter. This truth is that His Blood was shed for the forgiveness of sins, and the scourging He took on His back was for our physical healing.

This view is also confirmed by Scaggs when she writes, “Christ’s unjust suffering results in healing for us by the removal of our sins.”¹⁰

Another example of Jesus’ divine healing power is found in Mark 10:46-52 with the healing of blind Bartimeaus:

Then they came to Jericho And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road. When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” And Jesus stopped and said, “Call him here.” So they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take courage stand up! He is calling for you.” Throwing aside his cloak, he jumped up and came to Jesus. And answering him, Jesus said, “What do you want me to do for you?” And the blind man said to Him, “Rabbi, I want to regain my sight!” And Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and began following Him on the road.

Here the Greek word *anablepo*, means “to recover (lost) sight.”¹¹ So this is what blind Bartimeaus was saying when he said he wanted to see. So again it is seen that Jesus in this passage is connecting both spiritual salvation and physical healing as two sides of the same coin. Jesus in response tells Bartimeaus that his faith has made him well, the word for well here is *sozo*, meaning “to save”¹².

The Gospel writers believed that Jesus was the fulfillment of the ancient Jewish Messianic Prophecies. Jesus preached and proclaimed The Kingdom of God, as recorded in Matthew 4:17, which states “From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” According to Goppelt,

¹⁰ Rebecca Skaggs, *The Pentecostal Commentary on I Peter, 2 Peter, Jude* (London: T&T & International, 2004), 42.

¹¹ Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 35.

¹² Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 610.

Their synonymous character was anchored in Palestinian idiom. People were reluctant to pronounce the holy name of God and therefore circumscribed it. 'Heaven' is one of the customary circumscriptions... The kingdom of the heavens—the plural form reproduces literally the customary Hebrew plural *shamayim*—meant, accordingly, the kingdom of the One who is in heaven, not a kingdom that is in heaven or comes from heaven.¹³

Goppelt goes on to state that, "Even if these expressions are problematic in terms of the history of tradition, we can be sure that Jesus announced an appearance of God in judgment that would bring history to an end."¹⁴ Jesus explains His Mission in the Gospel of Luke chapter 4:18-19:

The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.

In this passage, the Greek words respectively for, "recovery of sight"¹⁵ is *anablepsis*, and for "blind"¹⁶ is *tuphlos*. This confirms that Jesus' Mission was to proclaim the Kingdom of God by demonstrating that He could heal the sick. Another New Testament passage that speaks of physical healing is, Luke 9:1-6.

He called the twelve together, and gave them **power and authority** over all the demons and to heal diseases. And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform **healing**. And He said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, neither a staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not even have two tunics apiece. "Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that city. "And as for those who do not receive you, as you go out from that city, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them." Departing, they began going throughout the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

¹³ Leonhard Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament: Volume One* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1981), 44.

¹⁴ Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament*, 55.

¹⁵ Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 35.

¹⁶ Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 633.

At this point in Jesus' ministry He has demonstrated to His disciples how they are to proclaim the Kingdom of God and He empowers them through the Holy Spirit and gives them authority to cure all manner of disease. The Greek word for "power"¹⁷ is *dunamis* which is the root word of "dynamite." This word indicates something of an explosive, immediate nature. The Greek word for "authority"¹⁸ is *exousia*. Here, Jesus bestows on the disciples the dominion that He alone, at that point, had possession of because of His position as God's emissary.¹⁹ And He is now empowering the disciples to be His emissaries (in the Greek "apostolos"). At this point, the reader may believe that Jesus and His disciple/apostles had the power to heal the sick, but the main question is: *Can miraculous healings still be performed today?* Jesus' answer to this question is recorded within John 14:12: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me, the work that I do he shall do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the father."

In the NIV, the Greek word "ergon", for "works" is translated "miracles". By saying this, Jesus totally destroys the doctrine of cessationism, which is the belief that the performing of miracles ceased with the death of the last apostle. As if the point was not made clear enough by this text, Jesus goes on to declare in Mark 16:17-18,

And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in my name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.

The Greek word for healing in this passage is also "iaomai." which was the word used in I Peter 2:24 and Luke 9:1-6. These phrases, "will accompany", "will cast out

¹⁷ Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 159.

¹⁸ Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 225.

¹⁹ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX, The Anchor Bible Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1981), 753.

demons”, “will speak with new tongues”, “will pick up serpents”, “... it shall not hurt them”, “will lay hands on the sick”, “will recover” were recorded in the future active indicative indicating that these signs continue even up to the present day. These passages show the Biblical support for the practice of physical healing in the local church context.

Traditional and Historical Analysis

Pentecostal and Charismatic

Historically, Christianity has both believed and taught that physical healing was not only possible but it was to be expected. The Gospels, as well as Acts, are filled with numerous stories of physical healing such as Jesus’ healing of the blind man in Mark 8:22-26, the woman with the issue of blood (Mark 5:24-34), as well as the man healed by the Gate Beautiful in Acts 3:1-8, in addition to Paul’s sight being restored, (Acts 9:17-19). Throughout church history, there have been continuous testimonies of physical healing. The following account, recorded in St. Augustine’s book *City of God*, the physical healing of a congregant named Palladia took place in his church:

Then indeed there arose such a clamor of wonder, such a continuous shouting mingled with tears, that it seemed impossible that it should ever end. The girl was brought back to the place where just now she had stood trembling. Those who had grieved that she had remained so different from her brother now rejoiced to see her so like him. They perceived that they had not yet poured out their prayers for her, and yet already their first intention of goodwill for her had been so quickly answered. They rejoiced in the praises of God with wordless cries, with such a noise that my ears could scarcely endure it. Now was there anything in their hearts as they rejoiced except the same faith in Christ for which St. Stephen shed his blood?²⁰

²⁰ Saint Augustine, *City of God*, (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1974), 1046-47.

However, in more recent years, there has been an attack on the church that has rendered much of Western Christianity impotent. This is a result of people trying to render God powerless for their own benefit. Ronald Kydd, in “*Healing Through, the Centuries*”, writes

Humanity has frequently decided to refashion Christ in its image rather than run the risk of being changed into his. The process has been one of simplifying Jesus, ‘dedifying’ him, or domesticating him. He had to be brought under control, made safe, predictable.²¹

One only needs to go into a traditional historic church to see that this is true. I grew up attending in such a church and the teaching there was devoid of any mention of the Power of God. There was even one Sunday where the statement was made from the associate pastor that it didn’t matter if people believed in the physical resurrection of Christ. However not all mainline denominational churches have fallen prey to such deceptions, thanks to the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. These movements are largely thought to have begun on January 1, 1901 with Charles Parham and a group of students praying for Agnes N. Ozman to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, with the Bible evidence of speaking in tongues. Physical healing through the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements has been restored to the Gospel message.

In post, World War II America, this restoration revived itself beginning with William Braham’s meetings in the Midwest. Braham focused upon the “Word of Knowledge”²² which is another spiritual gift that is found in I Corinthians 12. God warns us against an over consumption of knowledge at the expense of the Holy Spirit, but by

²² Ronald A. N. Kydd, *Healing through the Centuries*, (New York: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), XVII.

²³ Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 326.

World War II, America had largely foregone even a rudimentary knowledge of the healing gifts of the Spirit. In subsequent decades, God has used meetings, radio, television, and even the internet to proclaim the much needed message of physical healing.

The most common belief held by people who proclaim that the Healing Power of God is available today, such as Bill Johnson and Benny Hinn, believe that healing is part of the Atonement. Their main textual support for this doctrine includes Isaiah 53:5, I Peter 2:24, as well as the words of Jesus at the Last Supper, Mark 14:22- 24, and many other Scriptures. Evangelists, Benny Hinn and others have shown that healing is global and total; it is not confined to any one race, people, nation, or socioeconomic class. This has been seen in the spread of the healing movement throughout the world. Further, “today’s” healing, directly based upon Christ’s example of ministry and miracles, is evidence that the healing movement works and is fully in accordance with the Scriptures.

The problem with the healing movement is that it is largely outside of the local church context, meaning that if one wishes to go to a healing service, save for a few exceptions, one must go to a special event such as a crusade or a conference to find believers totally sold out on using the complete physical healing gifts of the Holy Spirit.

One such Evangelist who has been holding crusades since 1990 is Benny Hinn. Pastor Hinn has preached to tens of thousands of people all over the world with the use of television. His crusades have reached an untold number of people. According to Hinn,

regarding the ministry of healing, it troubles him when he is told that miracles are not for today because, as he states, what is being said is that Jesus has changed.²³

When I attended a crusade held in 2004 in the Hampton Coliseum, one of Hinn's workers relayed to the audience a conversation that Pastor Hinn had regarding the healing ministry. The worker, recalling what Hinn said, stated the reason that Benny Hinn has a job is that pastors do not know how to release the healing anointing in their churches. If one were to just look at the Pentecostal experience in America, one might conclude that it is nothing more than sensationalism driven by a conference or crusade mentality; yet it is so much more than that. According to Amanda Porterfield, "Pentecostalism today not only has a global reach ... Pentecostalism is a universalizing social movement."²⁴ In order to stop this trend in America, it is crucial that the healing ministry be returned to the local church context. Burgess expounds on the importance of physical healing to the church:

As we become sensitive to the unity of the human person and of the human race, we see how physical healing does more than rectify disorders of the body; it makes God present to the one being healed and to all those joined to that person.²⁵

²³ Oral Roberts and Benny Hinn, *Miracles: Yesterday, Today, and Forever: An In-depth Look at the Healing Ministries of Oral Roberts and Benny Hinn*. (Santa Ana, CA: Trinity Broadcasting Network, 1994), Video Tape.

²⁴ Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 173.

²⁵ Stanley Burgess, *International Dictionary of Pentecostal Charismatic Movements*. (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1988), 697.

Disability Theology

As was stated in chapter one, on the road to making the American churches more accommodating, leaders need to be aware that faulty theology can contribute to the isolation of the disabled community by the Church. For example, the Tanakh makes it clear that people with physical defects shall not come near to the presence of the LORD (Lev. 21:18-20). This bias carries through to the New Testament period when people with leprosy were so ostracized that they had to repeatedly announce to the people around them that they were unclean. This was done so that the ceremonially pure “whole persons” could avoid contamination under the Levitical code. Although this Tanakh theology was challenged by Jesus (Matt. 8:2-4) and a church would likely never openly hold this view, certain unseen biases in churches can still be felt and experienced by the disabled community in subtle and not so subtle ways, especially in churches that claim to believe in signs, wonders, and miracles, such as Pentecostals. Despite the American churches’ lack of acceptance of PWD, there has always been those like Helen Keller, who gave the Church a possible model to follow.

Helen Keller was chosen as this author’s historical figure, as stated above in chapter three because, they share a common desire to see disabled people, such as PWD, excel despite their limitations. Keller wanted to make the plight of PWD known and to see them excel in education, in order to make strides in all aspects of society. Keller did so with excellence as a pioneer in becoming one of the first world famous disabled persons known in modernity, if not the very first. Arguably, she was the first disabled person to blaze trails and break through glass ceilings in a way that made her a household

name worthy of receiving many prestigious honors, awards, and degrees during her life. Most notably, she received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1964 from Lyndon B. Johnson, which is the highest civilian honor that a President can bestow.

Keller's impact on the world continues to be felt through her many numerous books and speeches that she wrote and delivered. Keller was a staunch advocate for PWD²⁶ and was a great champion of the Braille reading system, simply by being visible. She proved, even without such modern advancements brought about by the Equal Access to Education Act of 1973 and American with Disabilities Act of 1990, that people with disabilities add value not only to their families, but also to the world at large. Very few people can claim to have had such wide and sweeping influence on the world as Helen Keller. She met and conversed with influential people like Alexander Graham Bell, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor, Samuel L. Clemens (a.k.a. Mark Twain), and many other more world-famous leaders. She traveled the world six times over and spoke on behalf of the people who experience sensory deprivation everywhere, speaking not only of their plight but their promise and potential. She raised millions of dollars for the cause of the blind and extended her outreach efforts to other critical social justice issues such as racism, ignorance, poverty, and women's right to vote. She even acted in movies and theatrical plays.²⁷ Even beyond important aspects of her life Keller broke into the field of theology when she wrote her book entitled "My Religion" that was discussed at length in chapter three.

²⁶ Keller's devoted a large part of her life's work speaking to people on behalf of the American Foundation for the Blind.

²⁷ Keller, *Light*, 7.

A major problem with the Disability Theology is that the theologians, who are currently developing it, assume that God is the author of sickness and disease. One of these theologians who is doing foundational work in this field, Dr. Amos Yong, is a prime example, the reason he became interested in this field of theology is because his brother, Mark Yong was diagnosed with Down Syndrome at a young age, and at the time of this writing has not been healed. This has impacted Dr. Yong's view, as he has let his personal experience inform his theology. Dr. Yong believes that people with physical and mental disabilities²⁸ (autism, cerebral palsy) will carry residual effects of their particular disabilities even into the eschaton.

Dr. Yong discusses the problems between the disability rights movement and renewal Christianity. Particularly, he discusses what he terms, the centrality of healing in renewal Christian circles. He states "Renewal Christianity is well known for its emphasis on divine healing. This strength is arguably its weakness when dealing with disability in general and people with disabilities in particular."²⁹

This author agrees with Dr. Yong's stated thesis in his article previously referenced above.

It is also important to mention here the extensive history of the church's charitable services to people with disabilities that have more often than not perpetuated paternalistic attitudes and practices toward such groups of people...Unsurprisingly; many people with disabilities shaped by the disability-rights movement have resisted such stereotypes of themselves.

For people with physical disabilities...church buildings that do not have externally visible accessible ramps are uninviting, or if, once inside the building

²⁸ Amos Yong, 2010. "Disability and the Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecost and the Renewal of the Church." *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 19: 76-93.

²⁹ Yong, "Disability and the Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecost and the Renewal of the Church." p76.

and the building and there are multiple floors or levels, this again broadcasts to people in wheel chairs, “You are not welcome here.”³⁰

However, the primary disagreement this author has with Dr. Yong’s assertion is that he would have renewal churches change how they present the gospel. He states

It is very difficult to get around this issue because of the centrality of healing in the renewal imagination...renewal Christians are insistent that the healings seen in the ministry of Jesus and in the lives of his earliest followers should be evident in the church today.³¹

The author’s only response to Dr. Yong is that the practice of healing the sick should be normative, because Jesus in (Matt 10:7-8) commands his followers to heal the sick. “And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, and cleanse the lepers, cast out demons.”³² Dr. Yong’s above statement perfectly illustrates this author’s problem with the field of Disability Theology in general, and Dr. Yong’s views, in particular. He wants to fundamentally change the mission of the church as describe by Jesus as shown above. The problem is the idea that people with disabilities can only receive ministry (i.e. prayer). There are ways to make people with disabilities feel loved and included without fundamentally changing the Gospel or the mission of the church as described in (Matt 10: 7-8) above.

However, the area that is most challenging to this author is when Dr. Yong starts discussing his views of the eschaton and the implications that his views have on Disability Theology. In his book, *Theology and Down syndrome*, Dr. Yong states that people with both mental and physical disabilities will carry the marks of their particular conditions into the eschaton. This is offensive to the author because, first it goes against

³⁰ Yong, “Disability and the Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecost and the Renewal of the Church.” p79.

³¹ Yong, “Disability and the Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecost and the Renewal of the Church.” p80.

³² See Matt. 10: 7-8, NASB.

traditional Christian teaching (1 Cor.15) secondly, the author has asked Dr. Yong in a personal interview “what does this mean for me, am I to believe that I am to run around in heaven in a spiritual wheelchair?”³³ Dr. Yong responded with “I don’t know, maybe”³⁴ the author believes that if Dr. Yong is correct in his assessment of one’s life in the eschaton then PWD have no hope of every being free from their afflictions. In his book, he quotes a philosopher whose views mirror his own views.

...this is not to deny that such defects will continue as a part of human identity in heaven. Those who negotiated this life with the additional struggles of mental or physical deformities will retain the memories of doing so as well as the positive character traits they formed as a result. Indeed, such struggles may have been means of grace that taught lessons of humility and dependence upon God. This is as true for those who have cared for such persons as it is for the persons themselves. The extra sacrifices of kindness and patience given on behalf of handicapped persons also shape the identity of those who offer them in faith and love and will remain a part of their history(Walls 2002:112)³⁵

Mullins quotes him as saying Dr. Yong’s theory of the resurrection states:

If we think that the afterlife is a ‘magical’ fix for all the challenges posed by disability, then we may be more inclined to simply encourage people with disabilities (as has long been done) to bear up under their lot in life and await God’s eschatological healing for their lives. Yet this assumes that the task so responding to the issues of disability belongs to God, and it also assumes that disability is primarily (perhaps only) an individual affair³⁶

Mullins seems to strongly disagree with Yong’s theory that a person’s disabilities define who they are.

It seems to me the Yong has a case of mistaken identity. By this I mean that he has confused metaphysical identity with ta sense of self. Further, he has confused

³³ Rushing, Clay. 2006. "Personal Interview with Dr. Amos Yong." Virginia Beach. April 15, 2006.

³⁴ Rushing 2006

³⁵ Yong, Dr. Amos. *Theology and Down Syndrome*. (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 112.

³⁶Mullins, R.T. 2011. "Some Difficulties for Amos Yong’s Disability." *Ars Disputandi* 11:1: 24-32.

the ‘is’ of predication with the ‘is’ of identity. Necessarily a person is identical to herself. Necessarily a disability is something a person has and not something a person is. A disability is an accidental, and not a necessary, property. A disability is not a necessary property of an individual essence precisely because it is a part of a contingent state of affairs that ... As such, Hauerwas’ dictum is false, and Yong’s hermeneutical principle lacks justification. Since Yong’s hermeneutical principle lacks justification, his re-articulation of the resurrection from a disability perspective is unmotivated.³⁷

Mullin’s states more eloquently here what the author was trying to communicate to Dr.

Yong back in 2007. That disabilities are not what define PWD this is why the author feels his views align with Mullins.

Conclusion

Now one can see the importance of the critical role that the healing ministry can play in the life of the church. The author has first-hand knowledge and experience of the power of Healing Prayer. Firstly, during a “Catch the Fire” Conference in March of 2006, the tension in my body caused by cerebral palsy was greatly reduced, and with time and continued prayer, this will improve. The following are testimonies of physical healing experienced by two young ladies that attended Kempsville Presbyterian Church, as I recollect them.

A young woman by the name of Kirsten McGrath, a personal friend, had been struggling for years with an anxiety disorder which required her to be on medication to control the severity of the attacks. The problem was, that these medications would potentially cause harm to a baby if Kirsten were to become pregnant. Since it has always been in her heart to be “barefoot and pregnant,” it was essential that she get off the medication before conceiving a child. Many people have continually sought the Face of

³⁷ Mullins, “Some Difficulties,” 24-32.

God for this miracle, and finally in October of 2006, Kirsten was able to discontinue taking her medicine. A month after, a couple of days before Thanksgiving, she discovered that she had conceived, and she now has a daughter who was born in July 2007. This is indeed a Spiritual Breakthrough and a demonstration of God's willingness and faithfulness to hear the cry of one of His daughters. And now Kirsten truly understands that the Lord is Jehovah Rapha.

The second testimony is from a young woman by the name of Rachel and her struggle with asthma. Rachel had been struggling with asthma since she was a young child. She had to utilize both daily treatments on an inhaler, in addition to other treatments which are common for severe asthma. On April 6 2007, Rachel learned that she would not be able to get a refill of her medication until the following Monday. She was very concerned about her health, because she had never before had to go so long without receiving any treatment at all. On April 7th, she requested from her former boyfriend, Pete, that he pray with her that God would sustain her until she would be able to get her prescription filled. Pete, exclaimed, "Babe, why don't we just pray that you **will** get healed!" At first, Rachel was reluctant to receive prayer, because up until this point she had prayed many times before, with no results. Pete however, was undeterred, and he insisted and Rachel went with Pete up to the altar to receive ministry. After thirty minutes of prayer, Rachel began to cough up phlegm and other bodily fluids. A few days after she had received prayer for her healing; Terry Meeuwsen of the 700 Club, received a Word of Knowledge (WOK) that someone was being healed of upper respiratory problems. Rachel has taken that word as confirmation, and since April 6 2007, she has

not needed her medication. This is another example of Jesus' ability and willingness to heal all manner of disease and sickness.

Through the use of Biblical testimony and church tradition, one has seen that belief in, and the practice of physical healing is biblical, and has been practiced throughout history by the Church. It does not really matter what method of prayer is utilized, but here is an example of a model that is widely used by Global Awakening, headed by Dr. Randy Clark. This model follows the process of first, interviewing the person who has come forward to receive prayer. Step two is diagnosis. The next step involves prayer selection. The fourth step is pray for effect, and the final step is a post-prayer suggestion. Sometimes another interview with the person coming up for prayer is held again between the fourth and final steps to see if there is any improvement or change. This can be an indication of whether one needs to give praise to God because the one seeking prayer is healed, or if further prayer is needed. This model will be taught as part of the ministry project associated with this thesis along with how to receive the Word of Knowledge. Not to pray for the sick, is to disobey Jesus' Command in Matthew 10:8, "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give."

As was stated above, on the road to making the North American Protestant churches more accommodating, leaders need to be aware that faulty theology can easily contribute to the isolation of the disabled community by the Church. The project associated with this thesis is to empower PWD to the works of the Kingdom of God. This will accomplish two things: it will breakdown an unspoken bias that exists within

the revival stream that PWD are merely just in a church to receive ministry and not provide ministry.

The problem, as suggested above, with the field of disability theology, is that it assumes that disabilities (i.e. autism and Cerebral palsy) are ordained by God. No other theologian better represents this view than Dr. Amos Yong. While this author respects Dr. Yong's attempts to bring some of the faulty thinking of the North American Protestant churches into line, the changes Dr. Yong proposes would fundamentally alter the Gospel.

The author supports a theology of ongoing outpouring of the Holy Spirit for healing and prophecy in this ministry project. Because people cannot give what they don't possess, the physically disabled volunteers who come to be trained in supernatural ministry will need to have a phenomenological experience of the Holy Spirit filling them and coming upon them in power. Baptism of the Holy Spirit was the key to the early disciples' boldness to pray, Prophecy and witness. The same applies today. Thus, near the outset of the training that this project proposes, there will be a time of teaching and impartation as volunteers open themselves up to being filled or re-filled with the Holy Spirit in power.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERDISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS

Advancements brought about by the Equal Access to Education Act of 1973, along with the Rehabilitation Act (1973), Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA) of 1974 as well as the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, are all federal laws that are in place to prohibit discrimination against students as well as acting to overcome barriers in student participation. The theory that the author will discuss in this chapter is the Inclusion Education Theory for the Physically Disabled. The author discovered this theory while doing research for this chapter. This theory comes from research done at the University of Tasmania. The author chose this theory because, as its name suggests, it emphasizes inclusion and contains all of the elements for a well-rounded educational experience. This chapter is very personal to the author because he has multiple learning disabilities that stem from Cerebral Palsy. The author will examine three core elements of the theory in this chapter including, accessibility for trainees, movement within the training area and assistance with taking notes at training or journaling while ministering in the field. The author will show how these elements relate to the Biblical, historical, and Theological chapters above.

Disability studies (DS) in academia emerged at approximately the same historical moment in the UK and USA. In the UK, the movement began with the publication of the *Fundamental Principles of Disability* by the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS, 1975), a disabled people's activist group. The *Principles* and their emphasis on the importance of full societal inclusion

were subsequently taken up by Abberley (1987), Oliver (1990), and other British sociologists who theorized the social model of disability in which disability is primarily understood as a result of oppressive social arrangements:¹

In our view, it is society which disables physically impaired people. Disability is something that is imposed on top of our impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society (church). Disabled people are therefore an oppressed group in society. (UPIAS, 1975)²

While the author takes issue with some of the language used above, he agrees with the sentiment. What the author specifically takes issue with is the statement that disabilities are social constructs that are pushed upon the PWD. The ministry context, which is pertinent to this chapter, includes the disabled community in the North American Protestant church. Although the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 gave this community physical access into the mainstream of our religious organizations, it cannot and does not change certain attitudes or beliefs regarding the disabled community.

Accessibility for trainees is important because if accessible space is not procured, then PWD who wish to participate in the training will not be able to do so. Secondly, if the trainees are not able to move around comfortably within the space, the training experience will be negatively impacted. PWD tend to be worried when they feel like there is restriction of movement and this could distract them from listening to the material that is being presented. The third area that pertains to this project is note taking during the training, or journaling in the field. It may be necessary for one or more of the trainee's to have assistance taking notes or journaling in both phases of the project. This is a very important element for the author in particular, as this thesis is being typed by

¹ Connor, David J., Susan L. Gabel, Deborah J. Gallagher, Missy Morton. "Disability Studies and Inclusive Education - Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice." *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 2008: 1-5.

² Connor et al., "Disabilities Studies," 1-5.

someone other than the author himself, due to the fact that he can neither read, write, nor type his own material.

This theory applies to the project in that the author/researcher will be training adults with physical disabilities, which necessarily touches on the field of education, in general, and on this theory in particular. Due to the fact that the participants will have physical disabilities, exploration of this theory and field is essential. After the training, PWD will be participating in a field experience where they will be asked to implement what they have learned by applying their training to their own ministry contexts. This will be accomplished by praying for the sick as well as prophesying. Researching this theory will help prepare the author/researcher to teach PWD by high-lighting some of the potential problem areas to be avoided.

As stated above, accessibility in all forms is a significant problem among North American religious intuitions. There remains a general lack of awareness about the fact that there are many disabled persons who would attend and serve in their churches if leaders would take better notice of them in order to become more inclusive in their approach to ministry. This problem largely seems to reflect the adage, “out of sight, out of mind,” when it comes to the disabled community being able to overcome barriers to attend and serve in churches. This project associated with this thesis proposes a solution to the problem of PWD not having a place to serve within the revival stream as it pertains to power evangelism. The solution is to provide proper training for PWD to serve on prayer teams where they are able to prophesy and heal the sick in the presence of clergy so that they can see the value that PWD bring as ministers of the gospel.

Interdisciplinary Theory

Before demonstrating how the project theme and chosen theory interact, a brief restatement of the project theme is essential. The project theme deals with a compassionate ministry of healing and prophetic encouragement, as modeled by Jesus, which empowers the physically disabled to heal and prophesy within the revival stream comprised of the Global Awakening/ANGA context. The physically disabled persons who participate in the project will be empowered to minister to the sick and to prophesy. The author posits that even though physically disabled persons appear to be oppressed by their bodily illnesses; still could and should minister by the power of the Holy Spirit. If physically disabled persons are trained and equipped to pray for the sick and to prophesy, they will become effective in initiating direct prayer for others in their ministry contexts.

The interdisciplinary theory that pertains to this thesis/project is the inclusion education theory for physically disabled. The author discovered this theory while doing research for this chapter. As its name suggests, the theory emphasizes inclusion, and contains all of the elements for a well-rounded educational experience. These elements include movement within the training area, assistance with taking notes at training or journaling while performing field ministry, which will be discussed, at length in this chapter.

The first of the core elements that pertains to this project/thesis is accessibility for trainees. Accessibility for trainees is essential, because if accessible space is not procured, then PWD who wish to participate in the training will not be able to do so. As has been noted in past chapters various functions of accessibility are a notable concern

among North American religious intuitions. As Dr. Yong stated in his article “Disability and the Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecost and the Renewal of the Church,”

For people with physical disabilities, church buildings that do not have externally visible accessible ramps are uninviting, or if, once inside the building and there are multiple floors or levels but neither ramps nor elevators for worshipers to access the multiple levels, this again broadcasts to people in wheelchairs, ‘You are not welcome here’. For people with sensory disabilities like blindness or deafness, few congregations have either Braille hymnals or sign-language interpreters available during the liturgy some ecclesiarches might argue: If we had blind or deaf people in our church, we’d provide the necessary services, or if we had people in wheelchairs in our congregation, we’d build ramps or elevators. But on the other side it could just as well also be said: because of the inaccessibility of our buildings and our events, we have already sent a signal to people with disabilities that they are a burden who needs to be accommodated rather than a potentially integral part of the church community.³

As stated various chapters this bias appears to demonstrate itself as a weakness within the Global Awakening/ANGA network as well as revival stream contexts. At a recent conference hosted by Global Awakening in April of 2018, disabled persons confined to a wheelchair were instructed to sit in the balcony section of the sanctuary. The author agreed to this arrangement, but later inquired as to why this was the case. The rationale that was given had to do with the crowded conditions, general safety, and concerns for the crowd’s sight being blocked by wheelchairs. While seated in the balcony, the author began to feel disconnected from his Doctor of Ministry peer group and requested that he be allowed to sit with them in the designated seating area on the floor level. Thankfully, permission was granted. As it turned out, all that was needed to accommodate him was to simply move a chair. No one’s sight was blocked, nor was safety compromised.⁴ This

³ Yong, “Disability and the Gifts of the Spirit,” 76-93.

⁴ Ironically, by putting the disabled up in the balcony the church was putting them at higher risk than if they allowed them to be on the floor level. The only way for wheelchair bound people to gain access to and from the balcony was via an elevator and, in the event of an electrical outage or fire, the elevators usually don’t work.

situation signals a common example of an unconscious, systemic bias against the disabled community, which can cause them to feel disregarded, ultimately falling short of the goal of total inclusion. Typically at the end of each night, people are invited to come forward for prayer this was not possible for the PWD in the balcony who were restricted to that area. The author had to encourage members of the prayer team to go minister in the balcony. If he had not done so, there would have been about one hundred people that would not have been able to receive ministry.

Thankfully, the author was able to experience a change in the policy for himself, despite, all of the other people who were in wheelchairs who were forced to remain in the balcony.⁵ Typically, revival-motivated ministries have afforded the author the freedom to sit in front of the platform. However, these allowances may have been due to his persistence and refusal to be denied access to the fullest possible experience. Hopefully, this thesis/project will empower PWD to speak up and advocate for them. The more of us that are able to do this, the quicker we will see this unconscious bias against PWD fall to the ground and be a footnote of history. One of the unintended consequences of a limited seating policy for a disabled person is that physical access is given, but inclusiveness is not, which can result in them still feeling isolated. It is important to note the distinction between access and inclusivity: access addresses physical presence, but inclusivity addresses a deeper, more emotional part of a person.

Secondly, if the trainees are not able to move around comfortably within the space, the training experience will be negatively impacted. The author has personal experience

⁵ Unfortunately, the author heard more than one angry or frustrated comment by disabled conference attendees about the church seating policy for the disabled which limited them to the balcony. Those individuals did not feel loved and accepted in this regard.

with this issue, as referred to in the first core element. Balconies are a less than ideal choice for seating PWD in a public space or arena. If there had been an emergency, PWD would only have one means of egress out of the balconies being the elevators, especially if the PWD are confined to wheelchairs. When there is limited mobility PWD tend to express greater concern about the restriction of movement within the area, rather than focusing on the material that is being presented. Personally the author feels the terror when in an enclosed area with a large group of people and not having the freedom of movement that able bodied people are able to enjoy. The images that come to mind are trips to malls, Costco or Walmart.

The third area that pertains to this project is note taking during the training, or journaling in the field. It may be necessary for one or more of the trainees to have assistance taking notes or journaling in each phase of the project. If a participant needs assistance taking notes, the author/researcher will ask them if they prefer to bring someone with them that they have worked with in the past, or if they would like access to the one offered on site during the training.

When Mephibosheth first appears before King David he is a broken man. As stated in chapter two, he refers to himself as a “dead dog”. This demonstrates how low his self-esteem is, which many PWD have, along with a similar feeling of self-loathing. In a teaching environment, with PWD it is important for the instructor to lift-up the self-esteem of the students. This can be accomplished in several ways, including providing access, mobility and general assistance to the students.

One of the goals of chapter two was to examine how the passage in 2 Samuel 9:1-13, which demonstrates compassion as well as an attitude of total inclusivity toward

PWD. King David's loyalty that was shown toward Jonathan through the full restoration of Jonathan's crippled son Mephibosheth to the king's palace. In the Tanakh section of chapter two, which began with background and overview information from the passages, makes orthodox applications according to the original intent of the biblical authors. To this end, detailed word studies were given on key words that directly pertain to the project.

The Tanakh exegesis showed that the Hebrew term, *hesed*, is a very rich and strong covenantal word, which is at the very heart and the center of the theme found in 2 Samuel 9:1-13. Additionally, the total restoration of Mephibosheth, which stemmed from King David's loyalty to his covenant with Jonathan, foreshadows the *hesed* of Christ, who on behalf of the LORD, does for His children, both allowing them to administer and receive the bread of healing. So, in similar fashion to how King David gave Mephibosheth access to social, financial, and emotional healing, taking him from a place of barrenness and shame to place of honor and dignity as a member of the royal house, so, too, is this given to us in Christ, as stated in John 1:12: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name."⁶

If the revival stream in the North America Protestant Church truly wants to spread the Kingdom of God they need to fully embrace PWD, as they are. One must strengthen their inner man before proclaiming truths about physical healing. The church needs to bring shalom "wholeness" to them by ministering to their minds, bodies and spirits, as King David ministered to Mephibosheth.

⁶ Jn 1:12, NASB.

In order to understand how this project relates to chapter four one must have cursory understanding of the Disability Theology. According to Mullins, Disability Theology can be described as

...is a project in postmodernism in that a key component is the notion that all voices have an equal say on all matters. Part of the project entails pointing out the past atrocities perpetrated on a particular group and then using the oppressed perspective to criticize and correct the views of reality that led to the atrocities.⁷

There are two notable problems that the author sees with the field of Disability Theology. Firstly, the majority of the field has been written with the notion that PWD are victims, which is only partially true. However, as was elaborated upon in chapter four, the way to correct this problem is not to change the historical doctrines of Christianity, but to empower PWD with the power of the Holy Spirit, which is central to this project. Secondly, instead of letting the text inform their theological conclusions, theologians appear to allow their personal feelings to influence their conclusions. This action contaminates the entire field.

Disability Theology relates to the interdisciplinary theory, in that it is a fledgling and relatively new field. Only in the last forty years has the Equal Access to Education Act been part of the educational system. Similarly, Disability Theology has only been around for the last ten years. By the virtue of the fact that both fields pertain to disability they intersect. Both fields stand to benefit from dialogue in order that insights might be gained for each field. Therefore, both fields would emerge stronger and there would be more depth added to the field of Disability Theology.

This thesis/project seeks to be the first step in what is hoped will be a bridge between the disabled community and the revival stream. This could impact the field of

⁷ Mullins, "Some Difficulties," 24-32.

education when it comes to schools like the Global School of Supernatural Ministry or Bethel Supernatural School of Ministry.

The historical figure examined in this thesis was Helen Keller because of her connection to the field of disability education. She was the first disabled person to have attended and complete college in the United States. She did so without the help of the laws for the disabled communities which are mentioned above. Keller received many prestigious honors, awards, and degrees throughout her life, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, in 1964, by President Lyndon B. Johnson, which is the highest civilian honor that a President can bestow.

She is also an extraordinary figure because of her global impact, which can be felt through the numerous books she wrote and speeches she delivered. Keller was a staunch advocate for the disabled community⁸ and was a champion of the Braille reading system by being visible and recognizable wherever she found herself. She proved, even without modern legal advances brought about by the Equal Access to Education Act of 1973 and American with Disabilities Act of 1990, that people with disabilities add value not only to their families but also to the world.

As was mentioned above, any good teacher who works with PWD will do their best to fortify the self-confidence in their students. In order to do so, teachers must connect with their pupils. One of the best examples of this in American history is the relationship between Helen Keller and her teacher. Of her teacher, Helen affectionately wrote, “My teacher is so near to me that I scarcely think of myself apart from her. How much of my delight in all beautiful things is innate, and how much is due to her influence,

⁸ Keller, *My Life*, 34.

I can never tell.” Likewise, Jesus through the Holy Spirit is a friend that sticks closer than a brother, and He brought his light and presence to Helen Keller through the ministry of Anne Sullivan.

As was mentioned in chapter three, one can make the case that many PWD have an inner life like that of Helen Keller before her teacher entered her life. Many feel trapped, isolated, or misunderstood, and sometimes feel as though they are living in utter internal darkness. Some struggle with depression as well as anxiety and never venture outside of their comfort zone because there is no one to encourage them to do so. The author is very fortunate that he has had friends and family to show him that he is valuable to society. However, the best person to teach PWD that they have value is not friends or family, but the Holy Spirit. They need to realize they can listen to the Holy Spirit for themselves and begin the process of entrusting the Holy Spirit with their lives.

Helen Keller is beloved in the disabled community, but it is also widely recognized how she needed her teacher’s guiding hand, in similar fashion to how PWD require the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit.

In the following section, the author will discuss how the inclusion education theory will shape his research in the areas of the thesis/project, including Bible, theology, and history. Every good teacher must find ways to connect with their students. The people who will participate in this project are known by the author. So, the connection has already been made, however, it is anticipated that the existing connections will grow stronger throughout the research process.

As stated in various chapters, on the road to making the American church more accommodating, leaders need to be aware that faulty theology can contribute to the

isolation of the disabled community by the Church. For example, the Tanakh makes it clear that people with physical defects shall not come near to the presence of the Lord (Lev. 21:18-20).

No man who has any defect may come near: no man who is blind or lame, disfigured or deformed; no man with a crippled foot or hand, or who is a hunchback or a dwarf, or who has any eye defect, or who has festering or running sores or damaged testicles.⁹

This bias continues through to the New Testament period when people with leprosy were so ostracized that they had to repeatedly announce to the people around them that they were unclean. This was done so that the ceremonially pure “whole persons” could avoid contamination under the Levitical code. Although this Tanakh theology was overturned by Jesus (Matt. 8:2-4) and it is difficult to image a church that would ever openly hold this view, certain unseen biases in churches can still be felt and experienced by the disabled community in subtle and not so subtle ways, especially in churches that claim to believe in signs, wonders, and miracles, like the Pentecostals.

The author/researcher will reiterate these details to those in attendance during the training portion of the project. It is important that the clergy in attendance understand that the revival stream, as strong as it may be, must re-examine how it perceives PWD and empower them just as they would seek to empower abled bodied members of the Body of Christ. This necessary step would allow these communities to return to the Biblical model set by Jesus when he overturned the traditions of man, concerning those who have Leprosy as in (Matt 8: 2-3) states.

⁹ See Lev 21:18-20, NIV.

A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.” Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy.¹⁰

The author hopes that this thesis/project will have an impact on the field of Disability Theology and how it continues to be shaped. As stated above, Mullins defines the field by suggesting “...it is a project in postmodernism in that a key component is the notion that all voices have an equal say on all matters. ...then using the oppressed perspective to criticize and correct the views of reality that led to the atrocities.”¹¹

Although Mullins is correct in his assessment, this author believes that this definition can be changed to reflect a more orthodox view, especially if some of the disabled community who are called by God feel empowered to contribute to the field.

As stated in various chapters, “Clay, if you never get healed will you still pray for the sick?” This was a critical question that was asked to me in 2007 by Dr. Randy Clark. He came to visit my seminary at Regent University’s School of Divinity and I was eager to shake his hand and spend a few minutes getting to know him. Being a seeker of God, especially one who hopes for revival, I was eager to meet Dr. Clark, who had just written his book, “There is More.” I didn’t just get a few minutes of his time however Dr. Clark was gracious enough to spend forty-five minutes with me in an intimate conversation. His question to me and my answers to him have proven to be a beacon of hope and a consequential motivation for my heart in the darkest of times. Partially, because of Dr. Clark, the author has not lost hope for healing, either in this life or in the life beyond. Perhaps most importantly, by His grace, the author often sees God heal and deliver others

¹⁰ See Matt 8:2-3, NIV.

¹¹ Mullins, “Some Difficulties,” 24-32.

through the laying on of hands. So, the obvious answer to Dr. Clark's question was, and remains, a resounding "Yes, I will still pray for the sick." The author's pursuit of God and desire to be an instrument of healing for the Holy Spirit has led him on a spiritual journey that has included many high and low points, and has transformed him into a passionate man on a mission to change the world, by declaring and demonstrating the Kingdom of God.

Only by divine grace has God's call become evident to the author, which includes ministering a Supernatural Gospel, including divine healings and prophecies, despite living with cerebral palsy and being confined to a wheelchair. The many obstacles this author has faced and overcome as a result of cerebral palsy since birth, demonstrates the calling on his life to prophesy and help set others free, which has been confirmed with life verses like (Jer 1:5) "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."¹² as well as in (Luke 4:18). "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free."¹³

The author hopes that readers may understand how he arrived at this thesis/project. While the author does not believe that he can single-handedly change the face of the revival stream, he does see the potential for this contribution to potentially impact an unimaginable number of people, by God's grace. The Inclusion educational theory has re-oriented the author by bringing to light some of his educational experiences, which

¹² Jer 1:5, NIV.

¹³ Lk 4:18 (NLT) says, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free."

will inform how the project is approached. Specifically, this includes how he will engage the participants in the training as well as throughout the field experience.

The author considers it a privilege to teach believers how to operate in the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially prophecy and healing. This will be the author/researchers first attempt at teaching PWD how to operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially those mentioned above. Because of his own life experiences as referenced above, the author does not see any particular or unique challenges when teaching this material to the PWD. He will endeavor to keep the three elements of the theory in mind. While he is planning and executing the project, the author supposes that new “insights” might come about, because when one does anything for the first time, new insights are always gained.

The experience of teaching PWD is what this project entails. The author will be concerned about the access to the room and movement within said space for the PWD that use wheelchairs. While these are issues that the author has had to consider for himself, thinking about and being responsible for other PWD, to provide these elements for them will be a unique experience as well as deepening the author’s understanding of these elements.

As the author has stated in various chapters, PWD as recorded in the Bible, were not able to minister before the Lord (Lev. 21:18-20). While the rationale today is certainly different, the end result is still the same. By granting PWD access and mobility within the training, the author will be doing his part to dismantle an unspoken bias against PWD. Just like Helen Keller broke down barriers in her day, the author will be doing similarly but within a religious context. Another parallel is when Moses liberated

the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. The author's context will be North American churches, and specifically, the revival stream's unconscious bias against PWD. Just as Moses showed his people the way out of physical bondage, the author/research will show his trainees' the way out of spiritual bondage. He will do so by introducing them to the Person and power of the Holy Spirit. The author/researcher has identified the Independence Model, which Justin Topp, who at this writing is the Assistant Dean of Science, Technology and Mathematics at Endicott College in Beverly, MA, defines as a

...popular model for the interaction of creation and evolution and is the one backed most predominantly by scientists or religious scholars that are united in their *war against the warfare model of science and religion*. Independence usually takes the form of saying something like, "science answers the 'what' questions while religion answers the 'why' questions." Therefore, they *cannot possibly* be at war with each other because they represent "non-overlapping magisteria" that play different games and only overlap when boundaries are overstepped and scientists or theologians are "arrogantly" speaking on areas that they shouldn't.¹⁴

An example of a theological scholar who has overstepped his bounds, according to this definition, is Dr. Amos Yong, who does not believe that it is possible for someone with Downs's syndrome to be healed without fundamental changing their personality.

The disabled community is a vulnerable group because of their physical limitations, which tends to impede their mobility in many cases, which is why they need laws such as the ADA, to give PWD access that they would likely not have otherwise received. The ADA does not and cannot change society's negative biases about the disabled community. In the group of clergy, who will be participating in the project, there will be some who will fully embrace what the author/researcher is trying to

¹⁴ Topp, Justin. 2011. "A Biologist's View of Science & Theology." *Opportunities at the Interface of Science and Religion*: 1-10.

accomplish and there will certainly be those who question the viability of the hypothesis to varying degrees.

The final draft of this thesis will contain charts showing initial demographics of how many clergy agree with the hypothesis versus how many do not agree. Another graph will show how many of the PWD are accepted as viable ministers after the training. This will include acceptance by the clergy and people to whom they are ministering.

Summary and Conclusion

The author has to confess this was a very difficult chapter to write. However, hopefully it has been adequately demonstrated that a robust understanding of the Interdisciplinary Theory of Inclusion education for the physically disabled, and in particular the three core elements, including mobility, access, and assistance with information gathering, is essential to this project. The author will be teaching PWD and walking them through a six-week field experience to gather data for the project related to this thesis. These principles will help guide the author though working with PWD in a structured context, which will be familiar and new for the author who has never worked with PWD in a structured setting.

The author hopes to empower PWD so that they can participate in power evangelism, while at the same time, teaching the clergy who are present that PWD are an untapped resource. This will hopefully begin the dismantling process that contributes to the bias against PWD, which still persists in the North American church and, in particular, the revival stream. Accessibility for trainees is essential; this chapter has shown that if

accessible space is not procured, PWD who wish to participate in the training will not be able to do so.

The second element, which is related to the first, is that if the trainees are not able to move around comfortably within the space, the training experience will be negatively impacted. This is because the trainees will be more concerned with their restriction of movement than the material that is being presented.

The third element that was examined is note taking during the training, or journaling in the field. It may be necessary for one or more of the trainees to have assistance with note taking and journaling in both phases of the project. The author will need assistance with note taking and journaling as he can neither read, write, nor type his own material.

It has been shown that as referenced above, this theory applies to the project in a way that allows the researcher to train adults with physical disabilities. This touches on the field of education, in general, and on this theory, in particular. Due to the fact that the participants will have physical disabilities, it is believed that exploring this theory and field was necessary. After the training, PWD will be participating in a field experience where they will be asked to use what they have learned in the training by applying it in their own ministry contexts. This will include praying for the sick and prophesying. Hopefully, reading this chapter provides an understanding of how researching this theory helped prepare the author/researcher to teach PWD. Highlighting some of the potential problem areas will allow this project to be duplicated.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

This project replicated a compassion ministry of healing and prophetic encouragement, as modeled by Jesus, to empower the physically disabled to heal and prophesy within the revival stream which includes the Global Awakening/ANGA context. The PWD who participated in this research endeavor were empowered to minister to the sick and to prophesy. This project sought to build a bridge between the disabled community and revival-oriented ministry leaders, with the ultimate goal of bringing the supernatural Kingdom of God within reach of PWD believers, not only as people to be ministered to, but also as people who are able to provide effective ministry, by the power of the Holy Spirit. It was hypothesized that if disabled believers are empowered and trained to demonstrate the Gospel in the presence of local ministry leaders, members of the disabled community would realize that they can also be supernaturally used by God. Thusly, the ministry leaders would realize that disable persons can be supernaturally used. It was believed that this approach would challenge, the cultural, systemic bias in the charismatic and Pentecostal traditions, which appear to presume that certain people are limited in ministry because of their physical disabilities

God is now calling the author back to his people in a similar way to how Moses was called to the Hebrews in Egypt, through teaching and training, to operate in the power of the Holy Spirit, and specifically, in the gifts of prophecy and healing. PWD

were trained and equipped to pray for the sick and to prophesy in a day-long seminar, which was followed up with personal mentoring. Through this training and subsequent personal mentoring, it was determined that the participants became effective ministers in initiating direct prayer for others. It was postulated that physically disabled ministers would gain an increased effectiveness in applying a supernatural prayer model after receiving training. The author aimed to bring PWD into an authentic encounter with the Holy Spirit so that they would feel the love and acceptance that comes from a relationship with the gentle Nazarene so that they would be empowered to minister to other people. By this kind of encounter, it was believed that PWD would learn that they can partner with the Holy Spirit, like any other anointed “able-bodied” believer. Through their relationship with the Holy Spirit, their disabilities would be brought to none effect.

Methodology

This researcher’s project design utilizes Action Research, using the Participatory Action Learning (PAL) model for this study. The definition of PAL within the field of Action Research is defined as, “is a disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking action. The primary reason for engaging in actions research is to assist the “actor” in improving and/or reining his or her actions.”¹

The broad methodological category of PAL was defined in the project, as the primary researcher and active participant am seeking to improve the existing culture of how PWD are view in the ministry as people who can pray for other instead of just

¹ Richard Sagor, *Guiding School Improvement with Action Research*, 1st ed. (Alexandria, VA: ASCD Publications, 2000), 1.

needing to be the recipient. Specifically, the researcher was seeking to demonstrate that PWD can give healing and prophecy to others.

A case study was chosen as the strategy of inquiry so that the researcher could explore in depth a one-day training event (see Appendix A) followed by a four-week measurement period. The focus of measurement was on the effectiveness of the workshop in creating a new confidence in the project participants, that PWD are stepping out of their comfort zones to pray and prophecy over others. As is typical of PAL, the researcher was involved with the project alongside the participants to help bring about the desired effect.

A small group of context associates served as the researcher's team in helping develop and implement a one-day training workshop designed to train ministry volunteers to give prophetic words and to heal the sick. The workshop participants included a person who works with PWD as well as Ministry Leaders who were interested in learning how to supernaturally utilize PWD within their ministry context. Another goal of this project was to increase the comfort level of PWD in initiating prayer for others.

Even though research field notes often revealed signs of immediate healing and encouragement, the limited scope and time of this study precluded detailed research and follow-up with those prayed for. There was one exception to this in the form of a participant who was able to do more extensive follow-up with the people that were prayed for. This study's focus was on participants gaining more confidence to hear God's voice, to give prophecy, and to pray for the sick and for ministry leaders to see how PWD can be used by the Holy Spirit, with the hope they are accepted to be used on prayer teams.

This project followed qualitative research, not quantitative or mixed method design. The advantage of the qualitative research approach includes greater flexibility in studying a complex human problem such as how the Church can be more effective in empowering PWD to minister. As was stated earlier in this thesis, there are many reasons why PWD have not previously been utilized in the ministry of healing. This project sought to be the first step in bridging the gap between PWD and ministry leaders. Data was triangulated through use of the pre- and post-tests using both open questions (see Appendix B), a focus group interview using open ended questions (see Appendix C), and field testimonials using “prayer encounter cards” (see Appendix D). Triangulation was utilized by the researcher to better understand and maximizes his confidence in the findings of the study.

Implementation

This portion of the chapter addresses how the research was conducted for the project. The project was conducted in two phases. There were two groups of people that participated in the first phase of this project. The physically disabled participants will be those that were trained. The other group that participated were the ministry leaders.

The planning phase of the project was centered on conducting an all-day training. The process that led up to the workshop encompassed prayerfully getting the word out about the workshop to the churches in our network, developing a training agenda, recruiting participants and ministry leaders, consulting with ministry leaders, collecting training resources, and physical preparation of our training location. Important to the

success of the workshop, the ministry team was comprised of one of my professional associates as well as a dedicated group of context associates who served enthusiastically in a variety of ways. There were many physical preparations to be made at our training location to create a warm and inviting atmosphere enhanced with plenty of refreshments.

Although approximately of two-hundred and seventy different ministries and one-hundred and sixty-two churches within the ANGA networks were personally invited to attend the workshop, none of them were represented. The attendees who participated came from my local church and some other ministry colleagues. The reason for the small turnout was physically disabled participants were unable to attend due to various issues concerning their disabilities. Nevertheless, the strength of my ministry teams participation made up for the lack of outside church participation. In the way of recording the workshop, the disabled participants were able to view the workshop and participate in the study.

Training Execution Phase

The workshop training was executed over a two-session format all day on Saturday, February 1, 2020 with each session lasting three hours. The goal was to teach a one-day training workshop and impartation service which demonstrated how to give prophetic words and pray effectively for physical healing. Eight ministry leaders and participants attend the all day workshop. The ministry seminar took place at Living Destiny Church in the sanctuary. A light breakfast and lunch were offered for all participants on site.

The sessions were taught by the researcher and a member of the ministry team. The training topics that were taught were, "Healing by Word of Knowledge" and "Five Step Prayer Model for Healing." Each session had a practical component that participants got to practice each topic in a meaningful and experiential way. The training began and ended with ministry times of impartation where participants experienced being filled with the Holy Spirit.

The morning began with worship and prayer followed by a testimonial from one of the ministry team leaders. Following opening prayer, the workshop began with what we planned to accomplish as a result of the workshop. The first session of the day was on "Healing by Word of Knowledge" and focused on the various ways people in the Bible experienced hearing the voice of God. The session was followed by an open discussion on the ways the participants experienced hearing God's voice. The morning session closed with an exercise where each person practiced giving and receiving prophetic words. After lunch, the next session was on "Five Step Prayer Model for Healing" with a short time of practice at the end of the session. Finally, before anyone left, I invited them to participate in the next phase of the project. Seven initially signed up to attend, but only one actually attended in person. The other six participants have viewed the workshop online. Two participated to completion.

The participants who attend the training as observers were local members of church congregations and their ministry leaders, who were interested in seeing the implementation of the goals of this project. The age, denominational background, and ministry experience of the participants varied widely.

The post-training surveys were given following each session which attempted to measure the participant's reaction to the training, most importantly, the physically disabled volunteers who participated in phase two of the project. During the four-week phase the volunteers were challenged to pray for and prophesy for people, and given personal encouragement and mentoring by the researcher through weekly texts and personal communication. Collected data in the researcher's field notes are included in the number and type of prayer ministries given, the degree of healing and encouragement manifested in those receiving prayer, and the subjective impact to the volunteer by the ministry encounter.

The last form of measurement was the post training focus group interviews which represent across sections of those participants who were part of the project. These focus group interviews evaluated the data in the researcher's field notes and gathered additional feedback in person, which clarified and elaborated on the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of the participants. These group interviews were held within four weeks following the completion of the second phase of the project.

Data Collection and Mentoring Phase

The third phase of the project took place during the four weeks following the workshop. The data collection and mentoring phase lasted from February 1, 2020 to March 8, 2020 for the two participants that physically attended. Initially, the researcher envisioned this phase would only take four weeks, but the time was extended, due to issues with the videographer. The adjustment was necessary due to the recording being delayed and with participants not being allowed to go out and pray for people due to

government restrictions in place from the Coronavirus. A good portion of prayer encounter data was observed and documented during the month of February when the one participant had their prayer encounters.

One of the seven people who attended the workshop either in-person or by video link ended up becoming “project participants” in this phase. Each of these participants agreed to the challenge I issued at the workshop, along with my offer to coach and mentor them in supernatural ministry over the next four weeks. I focused my attention on the project participants by providing regular emails and/or phone calls to offer encouragement and coaching. They, in turn, documented their healing and prophetic prayer encounters over the next four weeks. A final group interview, attended by the two participants, was held March 8, 2020, at the very end of the project and provided qualitative data, which was triangulated with the data collected beforehand, and analyzed to come up with conclusions and lessons learned in the data analysis phase.

Data Analysis Phase

In the data analysis phase the researcher employed the data analysis tools which were described in detail in the previous section on methodology. The post training focus group interview was with the participant who participated in the project. These two individual, myself included, met to discuss and evaluate the data collected in the researcher’s field notes, as well as to further clarify and elaborate on the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of the project participants.

To summarize, the project hypothesis was that physically disabled ministers will gain an increased effectiveness in applying a supernatural prayer model after receiving training. This was measured by:

1. What their pre training experience level was regarding praying for the sick and prophesying to others. This was a measure of effectiveness not based on how many were healed or encouraged, but on how often they stepped out to actually pray prior to the training.(measurement tool: pre-training survey),

2. How their confidence level has grown through the equipping given at the workshop. In other words, has the workshop experience given them tools to be more likely to step out and pray for others more than they did prior to the training (measurement tool: post-training survey),

3. Whether or not the workshop ministry training and mentoring model combined was effective, based on whether or not attendees prayed more often for others after the training than before the training. In actual ministry situations over the four weeks (measurement tools: researcher field notes and focus group interview).

Summary of Learning

This section will address what the researcher and the project participants and ministry leaders learned from the project. This will be done by looking at how the data gathered answered the key research questions, “The existence within the church that there is a separation between PWD and ministry leaders that do not believe PWD can minister effectively” “Can an all-day workshop-style seminar be effective in initiating PWD into a four-week period of praying for the sick and prophesying to others?” The qualitative data

was analyzed to look for emerging themes and sub-themes. In this way, the traditions of the social sciences were followed. The major themes will be examined through the data in the pre-test and post-test, journal questionnaires, and the focus group interview. Some graphs will be used to summarize the data. This section will be concluded by discussing the ways in which the hypothesis was supported or negated.

Themes for the Qualitative Data

The two major themes that emerged from the analysis of the qualitative data is drawn from the ministry leaders and the participants. These themes will be developed in detail in the following sub-sections.

The major themes emerging at the training were, 1) increased confidence and boldness to initiate prayer for the PWD, 2) ministry leaders accepting PWD on prayer teams. The other themes that emerged from the data were Physical Healing and Prophetic Words that the PWD used when praying. The data suggests that 100% of the workshop attendees, this includes both PWD and ministry leaders indicated that the workshop equipped and inspired PWD to become more likely to step out of their comfort zones and initiate prayer for others while the ministry leaders to become more likely to utilize PWD on their prayer teams.

Ministry Leaders

The first theme that emerged is entitled Ministry Leaders. Healing and prophecy, two spiritual gifts which are highlighted in this project, are said to be “eagerly desired” by the Church (1 Cor 14:1). The position of this project is that PWD can and should

minister prophetic words as well as demonstrate gifts of healing under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. At the workshop, the gifts of healing and prophecy were imparted to each participant during the time of impartation. Some of the attendees received a spiritual impression, a vision or picture, a word of knowledge or personal word of prophecy.

The workshop itself, as evidenced by the pre- and post-tests from the ministry leaders, showed that all they were impacted to incorporate PWD in their ministry. Seven out of seven (100%) who attended the workshop answered, they were “more likely” to be open to PWD ministering in your congregations (see Figure 1). Seven out of seven (100%) answered that they were “more likely” to accept PWD ministering in the Holy Spirit (see Figure 2), and seven out of seven answered they were “more likely” to receive ministry from PWD than before the workshop (see Figure 3). Seven out of seven (100%) of workshop attendees answered “yes” to the question, “Have you personally received ministry from PWD (see Figure 4)?” Reinforcing his data were many ministry leaders were open to having PWD on their prayer teams.

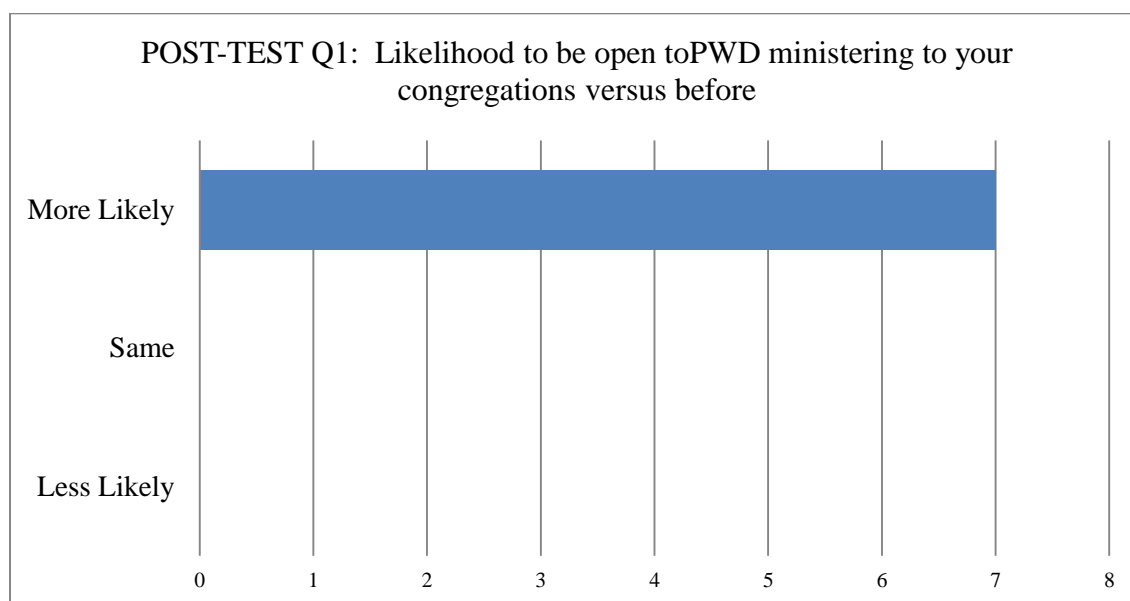


Figure 1. Ministering in their congregations

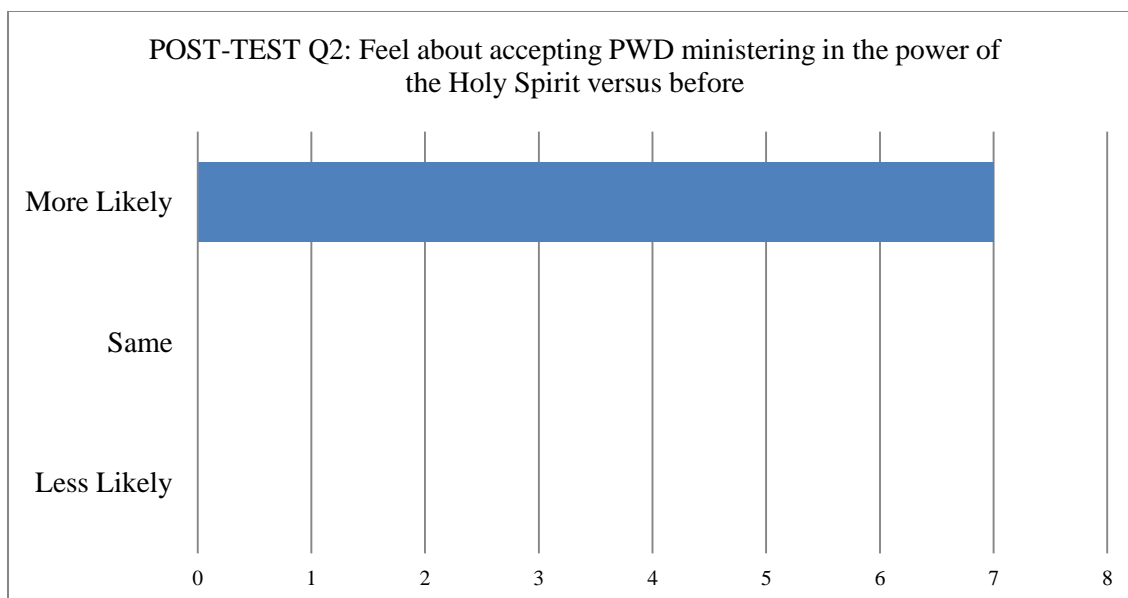


Figure 2. Acceptance of PWD ministering in the Holy Spirit

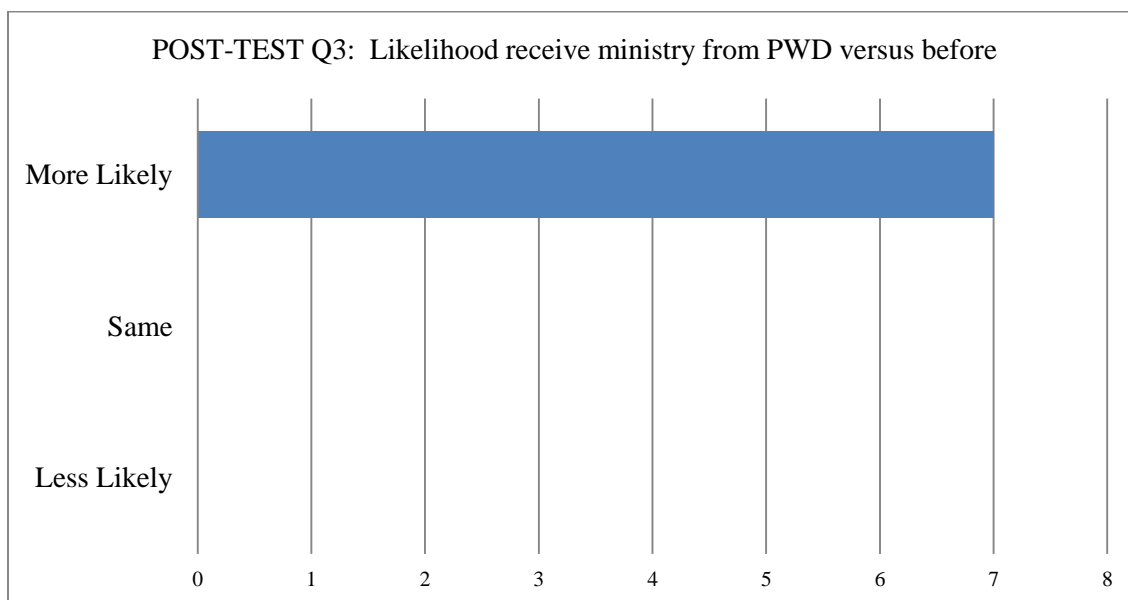


Figure 3. Receive ministry from PWD

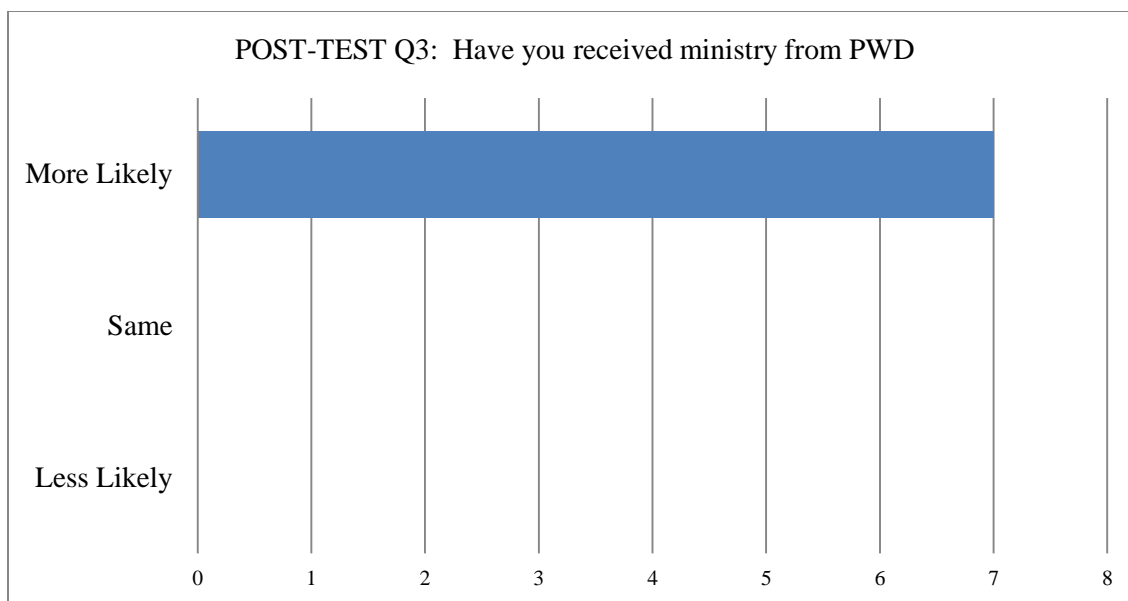


Figure 4. Received ministry from PWD

There were several ministry leaders during the workshop that were moved by the PWD participants openness to received God, based on the ministry leaders comments, the most common feedback given able the experience was how moved they were to witness the Holy Spirit using the PWD. Ministry leader attendee ML-3, a minister who is a Pentecostal/Charismatic known for his strong prophetic gifts and healing, who observed at the workshop, “ I feel that PWD should minister according to the gift or gifts that they have been given to them by the Holy Spirit.” He went on to say about receiving ministry from someone with a disability “The Holy Spirit who is doing the work not the person, so the disability should not be a factor.” He ended with the following comment. “Because a person with a disability may be more surrendered to the Holy Spirit, than those without a disability” Another evidence of the power of the PWD on the ministry leaders was the comments from ML-2, who is currently preparing for professional ministry and is a Pentecostal/Charismatic who attended the workshop. “We need to witness PWD ministering more often.” He went on to say “I am open to receiving ministry from PWD,

because PWD seem to be more connected to the Holy Spirit than many people without a disability.” Prophecy and healing can easily be seen operating in the Holy Spirit through PWD, which was reinforced through the experiences of the ministry leaders.

PWD Participants

The second major theme that emerged is entitled PWD participants. Healing and prophecy, two spiritual gifts which are highlighted in this project, are said to be “eagerly desired” by the Church (1 Cor 14:1). The position of this project is that PWD can and should minister prophetic words as well as demonstrate gifts of healing under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. At the workshop, the gifts of healing and prophecy were imparted to each participant during the time of impartation. Some of the attendees received a spiritual impression, a vision or picture, a word of knowledge or personal word of prophecy.

The workshop itself, as evidenced by the pre- and post-tests from the participants showed them being led by the Spirit of God, especially in gaining more confidence to hear God’s voice, to give prophecy, and to pray for the sick. One out of two (50%) participants who attended the workshop answered, as a result of attending the workshop, they were “more likely” to hear God’s voice in the future (see Figure 5). One out of two (50%) answered that they were “more likely” to prophecy to others in the future (see Figure 6), and one out of two (50%) answered they were “more likely” to heal the sick in the future (see Figure 7). Two out of two (100%) of workshop attendees answered “yes” to the question, “Did you experience the gifts and power of God being imparted to you through the Holy Spirit (see Figure 8)?” Reinforcing this data were the participants

comments which pointed to being physically impacted by the Holy Spirit during the workshop.

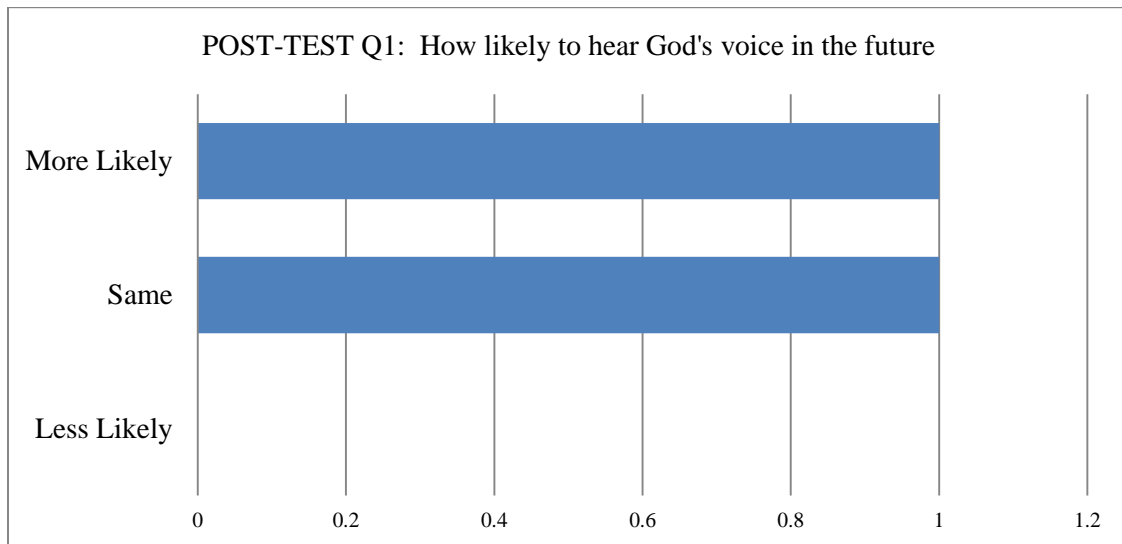


Figure5. Hear God's voice

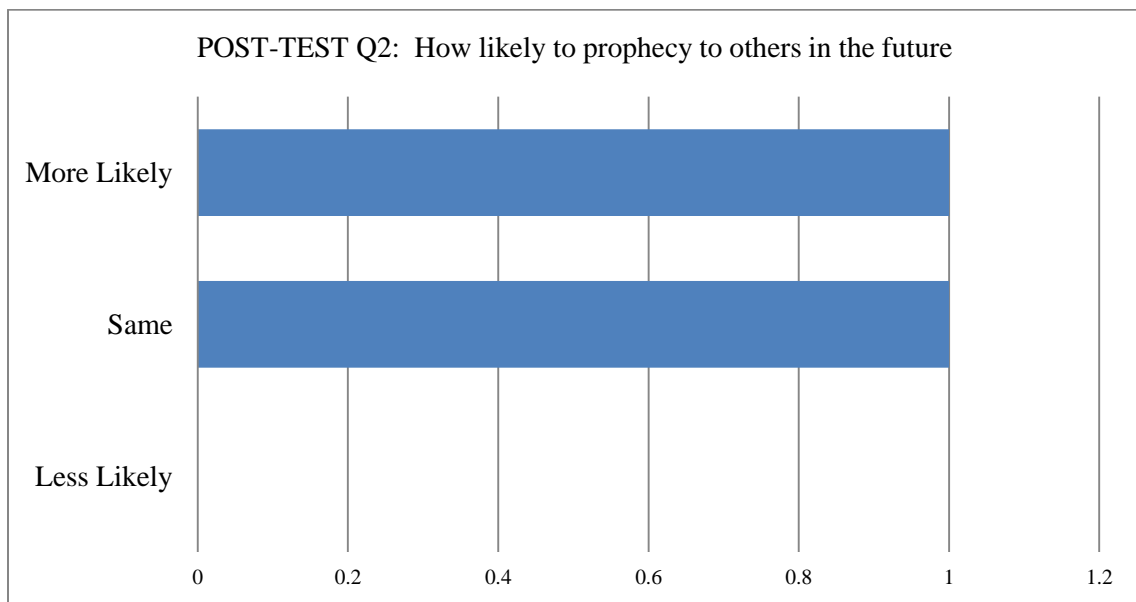


Figure6. Prophecy to others

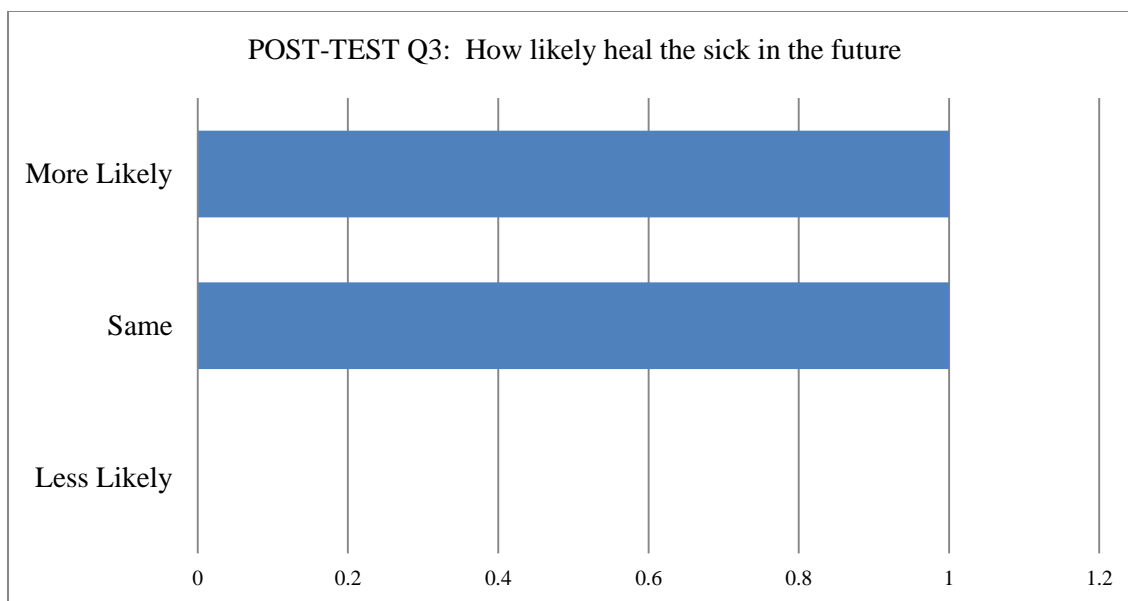


Figure7. Heal the sick

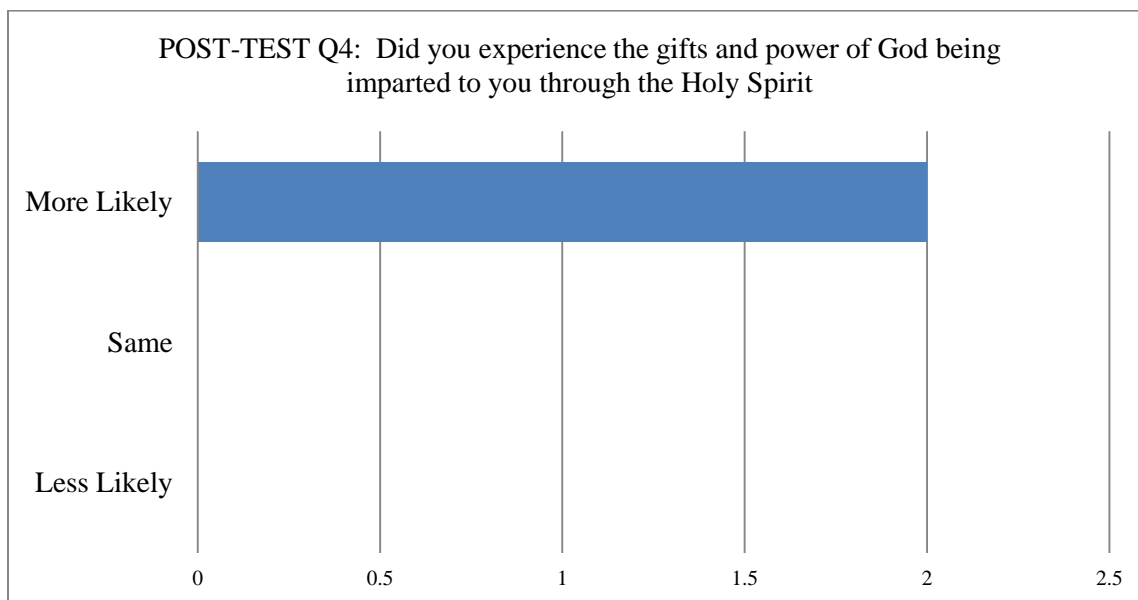


Figure8. Gifts and power of God

Another evidence of the power of Physical Healing was observed in how the two project participants were led, guided, and empowered by the Holy Spirit in praying for people in the four weeks following the workshop. A total of ten “prayer opportunities” were recorded in journal question form and turned into the researcher by the participants. Four of those encounters were prayers for physical healing, and six were some type of

prophetic encounter. Four of the total ten (40%) recorded encounters occurred in a church setting, while six of the ten (60%) occurred outside of church in places like homes, over the phone, in places of business, or social media format (see Figure 5). The data here strongly suggests a gained sense of confidence and boldness on the part of participants to step outside their normal comfort zone and pray for people outside of a religious setting.

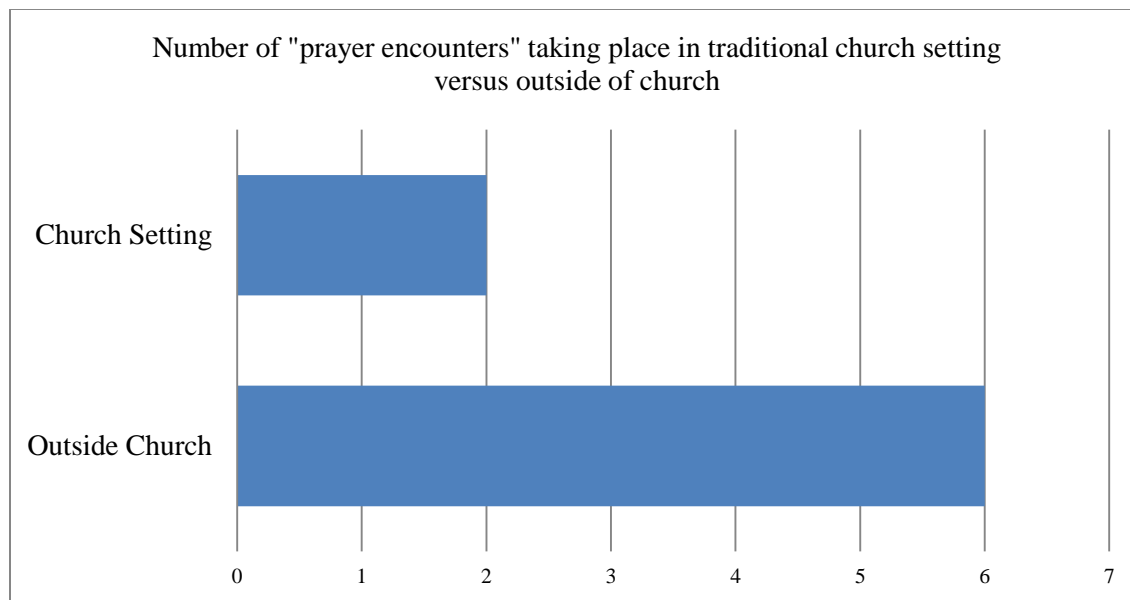


Figure 9. Prayer encounters in church versus outside church

One powerful prayer encounter involved participant one (P1) who ministered to a woman experiencing severe shoulder pain. P1 felt that being led by the Holy Spirit to pray over the phone and that is where P1 encountered Kathy (not her actual name). P1 shares the following experience,

A friend of a friend texted saying Kathy was in need of prayer for her intense shoulder pain, Kathy was trying to avoid having surgery. I placed the call and prayed for her for healing over the phone. Kathy stated the pain was a 8 on the scale of pain. After the first prayer where I commanded the pain to leave and the shoulder to be healed the pain went to a 5. I then prayed a second time where I bound the spirit of infirmity the pain went to a 2. Kathy testified that it was “amazing” and was greatly relieved. She was invited to the weekly Power Evangelism class the following week and she came! A couple of weeks later Kathy stated the pain had returned but no more than a 5 or 6. She was invited to

the weekly Power Evangelism class the following week and she came! This time I got to lay hands and pray for healing. After another 2 or 3 prayers for healing and binding of spirits and infilling of the manifest presence the pain went to a 0 (maybe 1). Kathy said she felt “comfortable”. She also prayed to receive Jesus in thanks for her healing. She gave a heartfelt prayer of thanks and surrender to Jesus (with tears). She was invited to continue coming to our Do What Jesus Did group study

This is an excellent example of the participant sensing the subjective leading of the Spirit. This is the first time that P1 prayed on his own without help to heal someone. He stated after this prayer “The sight of seeing someone healed and knowing that God used me to do it always makes me feel joyful inside.” The impartation of the Holy Spirit that P1 received at the workshop helped him to step out and pray boldly for others, and resulted in even more impactful encounters like this one.

During another physical healing, participant one (P1) ministered to a man that does landscaping and was experiencing terrible back pain. P1 felt that being led by the Holy Spirit to pray over the man in the yard and that is where P1 encountered Bob (not his actual name). P1 shares the following experience,

I have known the man for many years since he had been doing our lawn work. One day when he was over he shared that he has had terrible back pain on the pain scale of 5-10 this has been going for over 20 years from an old injury. I told him that if you let me pray for you Jesus will heal your back because he loves you. I laid my hands on Bob’s back and prayed. It took 2 prayers for the pain to completely go away. He was now able to bend at the waist and touch his toes, along with doing trunk twists. He said it was amazing. I saw Bob again a few weeks after I prayed for him and he stated that the pain was back. I did not seem to be receptive to being prayed for again.

This is another example of the participant sensing the subjective leading of the Spirit. Although, P1 was not sure how to handle the healing not being permanent and Bob was not receptive to be prayed for again, he indicated that he was able to learn from the experience. He stated after this prayer “I still grew because of another miracle that

happened in front of me and it is certainly possible to do the things Jesus did. This still has increased my confidence.” The impartation of the Holy Spirit that P1 received at the workshop helped him to step out and pray boldly for others, even when the healing is not as complete as hoped.

It is satisfying to report such dramatic results. In fact, participants reported observing at least some degree of physical healing take place in all six (100%) of the healing prayer encounters. The participants recorded that all six encounters showed (100%) where there was at least an eighty percent or more reduction in pain or other symptoms. Measuring the effects or percentages of healing occurring was not the primary focus of this study, but rather the focus was on the overall impact with healing prayer on the part of the participants.

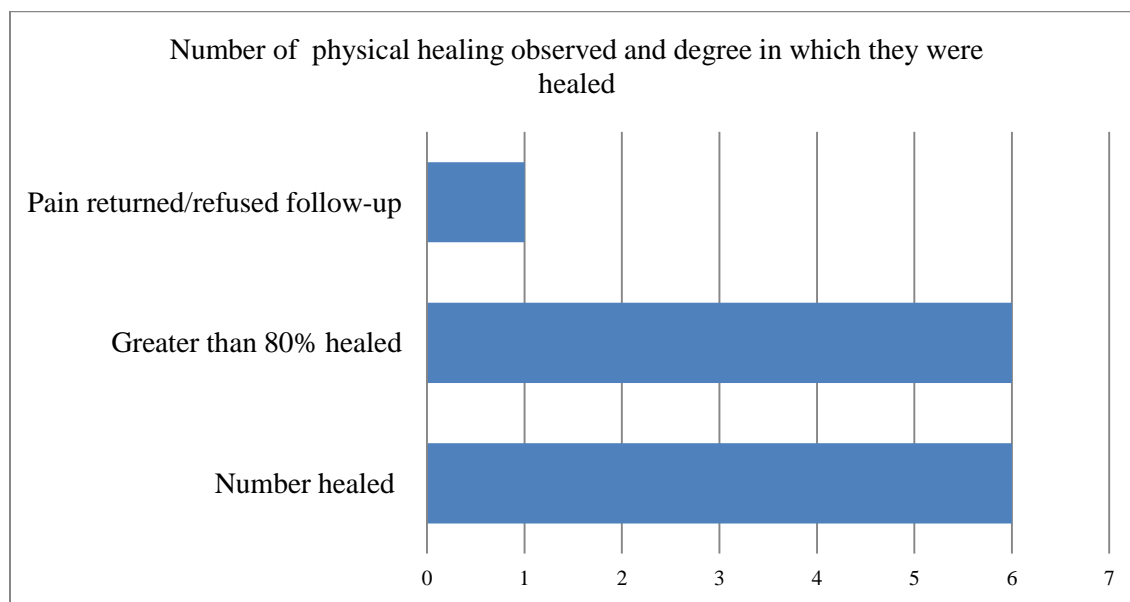


Figure10. Physical healing observed

The post-project focus group discussion was also filled with references to the physical healing and prophetic encounters evidenced in this project. The two participants

commented on the theme of operating in the power of the Holy Spirit. Participant one (P1), answered the focus group question, “How has attending the workshop impacted your life and ministry since then?” He said, “I was taught that I can become a conduit of Christ’s love and that is really awesome feeling.” He went on to state “I was shown that I can heal people with the pure joy in how Christ can impact my life.” Participant two (P2) answered focus group question, “What was you most memorable and meaningful testimony of giving a prophetic word or healing the sick?” He said, “It was when I was asked to prophecy the sex of a baby. Upon birth my prophecy was correct, the parents were not aware until the birth.” Finally, participant one (P1) commented on a the difficulties and or disappointments he,

I feel some of the difficulties are that people will say no to you when you ask to pray for them. I am not sure if this is due to them not being able to fully accept being prayed for or that they feel someone with a disability cannot pray for them. The disappointment that I felt was due to why some people are not fully healed, along with them not being open to being prayed for again. So was this the Holy Spirit fully acting through me by not completely healing some people.

Thus, the data showed the major theme of physical healing to be powerful and pervasive in the participants’ experiences both in the workshop and in the four-week following the training.

One powerful Prophetic encounter involved participant two (P2) who ministered to a man who was experiencing vocal issues and was not able to sing at the conference. P2 felt that he was being led by the Holy Spirit to pray for the man and that is where P2 encountered John (not his actual name). P2 shares the following experience,

At a church conference, as I was walking along the booths that were set up. One on the worship leaders was having a problem singing. I asked to pray for him. I laid my hands on his throat and prayed he was completely healed and was able to sing. Then as a result of him being healed his wife stated to tell everyone there that I had prayed for her husband and he was healed.

This was a very powerful healing for P2. He stated after this prayer “The sight of seeing the man be able to sing again was overwhelming.” The impartation of the Holy Spirit that P2 received at the workshop helped him to step out and pray boldly for others, and resulted in even more impactful encounters like this one.

During another prophetic encounter, participant two (P2) ministered to a woman that was experiencing terrible back pain, along with limited ability to walk. P2 felt that being led by the Holy Spirit to pray over the woman at the store and that is where P2 encountered Lucy (not her actual name). P2 shares the following experience,

One time I was out walking around and had gone to the store and I saw a woman that had a walker and was doubled over in pain. The Lord spoke to me to pray for her. After the pray she was able to walk straighter and she did not need the walker any more. Her companion pushed the walker along as the woman walked with no pain.

This is another example of the participant sensing the subjective leading of the Spirit. He stated after this prayer. “I am always glad when people and encouraged when the lord uses me in prophecy and healing.” He also went on to state “The people that receive healing are always surprised that someone with a disability can heal them.” The impartation of the Holy Spirit that P2 received at the workshop helped him to step out and pray boldly for others.

Percentages reported of immediate impact was more common in the prophetic prayer encounters. In six out of six (100%) prophetic prayer encounters, participants reportedly observed some sort of spiritual encouragement being received by those prayed for in the way of prophetic confirmation.

There was an informal sit down with some of the ministry leaders following the workshop. This was to get their views on the training and how they were impacted by the use of PWD in workshop. ML1 noted that particularly well in the interview,

I hope this training can be done again with many more churches willing to participate. The ministry leaders need to experience the power that PWD have when it came to healing prayer and prophetic encounters. We as ministry leaders need to see how the Holy Spirit uses PWD unconditionally to pray for others. This just affirmed my belief that church needs to use all of the flock not just the chosen few on prayer teams.

The data suggested from the pre- and post-tests, journal questionnaire, and focus group suggest that the participants were filled with a greater understanding of the topics taught and had more confidence to go out and pray for others. The ministry leaders saw the work of the Holy Spirit in the participants and were moved by the power in which they are used by the Holy Spirit. This demonstrates that the ministry leaders are open to accept and use the PWD on ministry teams in the future.

Not only was the power of love on display through the dynamic of prayer, but also an abundance of joy and trust in God on behalf in at least one of the participant. P1 reflects on his prophetic encounter with Sue (not her actual name),

I was at work in the restaurant, where there is much interaction with the public on a daily basis. I met with a middle aged lady and she was having a very hard day. I took a few minutes to talk with her and let her know that I saw her and cared about her. When I checked back on her again, we prayed that time for God to help her with what was burdening her. After Sue had left the restaurant, she let the manager know that I helped and encouraged her and she stopped worrying about what was bothering her. This gives the understanding that encouraging words can really help in making people feel better, no matter what the situation they are facing at the time.

Thus, a careful study and analysis of data derived from the pre- and post-tests, and testimonies of the participants and ministry leaders support the finding that Healing

Prayers and Prophetic Encounters, ministered by PWD were accepted by the ministry leaders.

According to the post-project focus group interview (see Appendix E) with two of the participants, the workshop was successful in activating them to, 1) Step out and pray for people when prompted by the Holy Spirit and to do so more often than they did before, 2) Gave a better understanding of the use of the 5-Step prayer model and Word of Knowledge, 3) Feeling of growth and understanding when working with ministry prayer teams, 4) Ministry leaders greater acceptance for PWD on ministry prayer teams, and 5) Understand more clearly the importance of trust and patience when healing does not manifest through their prayers, or when people reject their offers to pray and prophesy.

Now this chapter will conclude by tying together the research with the project hypothesis, and answer the question of how well the project worked, including valuable lessons learned.

Conclusion

The two things that interested the researcher to conduct this project were to confront the cultural bias against PWD in participating in ministry and to improve the effectiveness of PWD on ministry teams. The ministry leaders that participated in the workshop agreed with the premise that there exists within the North American church a separation between PWD and able-bodied individuals as far as their ability to provide effective prophetic encouragement and healing prayer. The researcher designed the all-day workshop to which he invited those from local churches and other ministry colleagues. Seven people from local churches attended were all charismatic Christians.

Of the nine attendees for the training workshop, only two participated in the next phase of the project, which took place over a four-week period following the workshop. The assignment that was given to the two participants, was that they were challenged to pray for and prophesy for people, and give personal encouragement. As the researcher, my task was mentoring the participants through weekly texts and personal communication along with gathering field notes on each encounter. The field notes included the number and type of prayer ministries given, the degree of healing and encouragement manifested in those receiving prayer, and the subjective impact to the participant by the ministry encounter. Focus group interviews were held to summarize lessons learned and to help to determine how successful the project was. A separate informal focus group was held for the ministry leaders.

The primary research questions going into the study was whether attending a day-long workshop on healing and prophecy could effectively challenge both the participants into a periods of initiating healing prayer and prophecy and ministry leaders into accepting the participants effectively as prayer ministers than they did prior to attending the workshop. Based on the satisfactory amount of qualitative testimonial data collected, the researcher believes that the final and overall analysis strongly supports his hypothesis in the affirmative. That is, a triangulation of the data strongly suggests that all participants intentionally operated in the supernatural gifts of healing and/or prophecy at some point over the four-week observation period, and most of them seemed to do so more often than they did before the training. The research suggests that participant one (P1) was confident enough in practicing these gifts for the first time. In the case of participant two (P2), it could be said he saw a marked increase in the impact of prayers.

Admittedly, there were five participants who initially signed up to participate in the measurement phase of the project that did not actually participate due to various reasons. One was unable to attend the training in person due to not having personal attendants available for the day of the week. One participant did not believe he could sit comfortably for the duration of the workshop due to challenges related to his disability. Other participants were unable to attend due to lack of accessible transportation. After some technical issues on the part of the researcher to have the video ready sooner. These five were unable to go out and pray for the sick or prophecy for people due to the Covid-19. Participants felt the workshop provided sufficient motivation and equipping for them to regularly initiate prayer encounters in the weeks following the training. Ministry leaders, felt the workshop provided sufficient motivation for them to equip PWD to minister on their pray teams.

Perhaps the biggest limitation of the project was in the scope of impact to the intended target audience, PWD. This, of course, was due to a lack of PWD represented at the workshop, along with the COVID-19 emergency that limited some of the video participants from being able to go out and pray and minister. The researcher surmises that the biggest challenge stood in the way of a larger participation of PWD was the unforeseen issue of attendees not able to have personal attendants and reliable accessible transportation available for the day. Of note, these are common challenges that PWD experience daily and further suggest a greater need to prepare for and anticipate the needs of PWD within ministry settings in order to obtain maximum participation. The researcher began reaching out and talking to others about the workshop many months

prior in the hopes that more participants could attend and that this would mitigate any potential barriers to their participation.

With the limitations that arose in the training for the PWD. The researcher realizes that it would have been more efficient to have held two separate training instead on just a combined one-day training. This would have allowed more time for each group's specific needs to be address in a more comprehensive way.

As for the content of the workshop, all of the ministry leaders that were present noted that they would be open to PWD ministering in their congregations. The most effective aspects of the workshop, based on feedback received was that the ministry leaders were willing to and received ministry from PWD and all had a very positive experience. The feeling among them was that PWD have a special connection with God due to their unique connection with the Holy Spirit. This seems to come from their ability to surrender to the Holy Spirit more than people without a disability.

In the final analysis, the biggest personal gain from this project has been a reinforced confidence in the Kingdom mandate of praying for the sick and prophesying to others. We have seen that PWD are as of this writing are a marginalized part of the North American Protestant Church. It is hoped that results this project, will challenge those ministry leaders as well as those who read this study to empower PWD to minister in their congregations.

A valuable future work related to this one, would be to further study the if there are more PWD ministering in churches then before, along with are there more PWD ministering in the congregations of the ministry leaders that attended the workshop. This study has motivated the researcher to dedicate himself to spreading message that is

contained within these pages, which is to empower PWD to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit so that he fulfilled the purpose of God for his generation.

APPENDIX A
WORKSHOP AGENDA

Saturday, February 1, 2020

8:00am – 9:00am	Continental Breakfast, Registration & Introductions
9:00am – 10:45am	SESSION 1 – Words of Knowledge
10:45am – 11:00am	Break
11:00am – Noon	Impartation & Ministry
Noon – 1:00pm	Enjoy Lunch
1:00pm – 2:45pm	SESSION 2 – Five Step Prayer Model
2:45pm – 3:00pm	Break
3:00pm – 4:00pm	Impartation & Ministry
4:00pm – 5:00pm	Interviews and feedback from Trainees and Clergy.”

APPENDIX B

**TRAINING OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITYT TO DO HEALING PRE AND POST
TESTS FOR PARTICIPANTS AND MINISTRY LEADERS**

PRE-TRAINING QUESTIONNAIRE – Participants

Name _____

Date _____

Email _____

Phone _____

1. What age demographic describes you best?

- a. Under 20 b. 20-29 c. 30-39 d. 40-49 e. 50-59
f. 60-69 g. 70-79 h. 80+

2. How many years have you been a practicing Christian?

- a. Less than 1
b. 1–5
c. 5-10
d. 10 or more

3. Which one of the following best describes your ministry position?

- a. Volunteer
b. Church Staff
c. Elder/Deacon
d. Licensed/Ordained minister
e. Currently preparing for professional ministry

4. What faith group or theological tradition do you most closely identify with?

- a. Baptist
b. Catholic
c. Methodist
d. Pentecostal/Charismatic
e. Mainline Protestant (Lutheran, Episcopal, Presbyterian, etc.)
f. Other: _____

5. Have you ever been baptized/filled or anointed with the Holy Spirit? (Generally defined as someone laying hands on you and imparting the gifts and power of God)

- a. Yes
b. No
c. Not sure

6. If you answered YES to the last question, how long has it been since your most recent experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit?

- a. Less than a year
- b. 1–5 years
- c. 5-10 years
- d. 10 or more years

7. How do you feel about God working through your prayers to bring healing to others?

8. Have you ever felt as if church leadership and/or church members discounted your abilities to serve in church because of your disability?

9. How well does your church physically accommodate your disability (i.e. how handicap accessible is your church?)?

10. How does your church and/or ministry do with making you feel emotionally included in services, activities, leadership and ministry opportunities? If you have any specific examples, please share.

PRE-TRAINING QUESTIONNAIRE – Ministry Leaders

Name _____

Date _____

Email _____

Phone _____

1. What age demographic describes you best?

- a. Under 20 b. 20-29 c. 30-39 d. 40-49 e. 50-59
f. 60-69 g. 70-79 h. 80+

2. How many years have you been a practicing Christian?

- e. Less than 1
f. 1–5
g. 5-10
h. 10 or more

3. Which one of the following best describes your ministry position?

- f. Volunteer
g. Church Staff
h. Elder/Deacon
i. Licensed/Ordained minister
j. Currently preparing for professional ministry

4. What faith group or theological tradition do you most closely identify with?

- g. Baptist
h. Catholic
i. Methodist
j. Pentecostal/Charismatic
k. Mainline Protestant (Lutheran, Episcopal, Presbyterian, etc.)
l. Other: _____

5. In your view what is the source of sickness and disease? (Please explain)

6. How do you feel about People with Disability ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit? (Please Explain)

7. Have you personally received ministry from a People with Disabilities? (If so, how did you find the experience)

7. Do you have any People with Disabilities currently serving in your ministry? (Why or Why Not)

8. How many People with Disabilities are participating or actively practicing in your ministry?

POST-TRAINING QUESTIONNAIRE – Participants

Name _____

Date _____

Email _____

Phone _____

1. After attending this workshop, how likely are you to hear God's voice in the future?

a. More likely

b. The same

c. Less likely

Why? _____

2. After attending this workshop, how likely are you to prophecy to others in the future?

a. More likely

b. The same

c. Less likely

Why? _____

3. After attending this workshop, how likely are you to heal the sick in the future?

a. More likely

b. The same

c. Less likely

Why? _____

4. At the workshop, did you experience the gifts and power of God being imparted to you through the Holy Spirit?

a. Yes

b. No

c. Not sure

If so, please briefly explain what happened in that experience?

5. Are you willing and able to participate in Clay's doctoral project over a 4 week period, by praying for healing and/or prophesying over people in your ministry context and providing Clay feedback on your experiences, and allowing him to provide instruction and feedback to you?

a. Yes

b. No

c. Not sure

POST-TRAINING QUESTIONNAIRE – Ministry Leaders

Name _____

Date _____

Email _____

Phone _____

- 1. After attending this workshop, would you be open to People with Disabilities ministering to your congregation?**

- 2. After attending this workshop, how do you feel about People with Disabilities ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit? (Please Explain)**

- 3. After attending this workshop, have you personally received ministry from a People with Disabilities?**

(If so, how did you find the experience)

- 4. After attending this workshop, would you be will to receive ministry from a People with Disabilities?**

(Why or Why Not)

APPENDIX C

POST PROJECT FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. How has attending the workshop impacted your life and ministry since then?
2. Discuss any specific areas of learning and growth from attending the workshop and since then regarding the workshop topics (Words of Knowledge and Five-step Prayer Model.)
3. Describe the ministry contexts in which you prayed for the sick and prophesied? (some possible contexts might include: home, work, church, marketplace, etc.) Which ministry contexts did you find the easiest and which were the most challenging, and why?
- 4 Describe the impact of your ministry upon others (including those you prayed for) during your participation with this project?
5. What was your most memorable and meaningful testimony of giving a prophetic word and/or healing the sick? What made it meaningful and memorable?
6. What kind of difficulties and/or disappointments have you experienced, if any, in doing supernatural ministry? Why do you think some people receive healing and encouragement and others don't?
7. What are areas of training or mentoring that you wished you could have gotten in the workshop and project that you didn't? What would you like more of, if any, regarding these topics?

* Thank you all for participating in my project and this focus group interview

APPENDIX D
JOURNAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Your Name: _____

Date: _____

Please fill out as soon as possible after a ministry encounter, take a picture and text it to Clay Rushing at 757-803-4932 or scan a copy and email: jcrushing1@united.edu

This was a Physical HEALING / PROPHETIC Encounter (*circle all that applies*)

What events led to you pray for healing or to prophesy

Ministry impact on them (what happened in the encounter, for example, “pain level went from 5 to 2”, or “person was greatly encourage . . .,” etc.):

Follow up intentions (Are you able or planning to follow up to confirm healing or pray/share further?)

Ministry Impact on You (Share your thoughts and feelings about this encounter / How did you grow):

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